

without holiness no man shall see the lord *Heb. 12:14*



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A
DISCOURSE

Concerning the

Beauty

OF

HOLINESS.

BY

The Author of THE DUTY OF MAN, &c.

1 CHRON. 16. 29.

Worship the Lord in the Beauty of Holiness.

The Second Edition.

L O N D O N,

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DISCOURSE

OF

Beauty

HOLINESS

BY

The Author of The Duty
of Man

AND

The Second Volume

OF

THE DUTY OF MAN
AND HIS OBLIGATIONS
TO GOD AND HIS NEIGHBOUR
ON A NEW PLAN



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THE INTRODUCTION.



An in his Original condition, when he first came out of the hands of his Maker, was a very noble and venerable Creature, adorned with many peculiar excellencies; and as the Psalmist observes, *Onely made a little lower than glorious Angels*: But of all his perfections, *Holiness*, as it was the principal and most oriental, so did it also give a beauty and lustre to the rest: It made his Authority and Power lovely and desirable, his Wisdom and Knowledge venerable, and every other attribute, which without this is terrible and dreadful, to be comely and praise-worthy. *This* was that single perfection that raised Man above the beasts

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that perish, and made him Heavens great favourite and darling; which if it had been carefully preserved, had undoubtedly secured our first Parents in Paradise, and prevented that dreadful Calamity that hath seized upon their Posterity.

But alas! how are we fallen from Heaven to Earth? from a Paradise of pure pleasures, to a miserable and painful Prison? We have lost that divine Image that was impressed upon Man in his Primitive State, which indeed completed, and alone preserved its beauty and comeliness; and with it have also lost every thing that did then contribute to make us happy; and are now become vile and abominable, and as miserable as we were formerly happy.

How much a serious view of that primitive felicity, man in his innocent state enjoyed, would contribute to plant in us a holy life, I know not: But I am sure it could not but mightily enhance the value of *Holiness*, and make it lovely and desirable. *That* man that reflects upon the dismal miseries he is exposed to in this lapsed estate, to what an infinite number of inexpressible evils, of insupportable pains he lies open; how he is hurried from a state of perfect bliss, to a woful
hell

hell of extreme torments : How exceedingly amazing is this ? The very Poet could say, *Miserum est fuisse beatum.*

But, God knows, this is but very seldom (and if ever, but faintly) reflected upon ; we are (to our shame) become contented Slaves, and satisfied to bear Fetters and Chains ; we continually live in the midst of all evil, never enjoy a moments solace or comfort : Notwithstanding of which, like mad-men, we are content with our state, and like the Sow take pleasure to puddle in the mire.

And although that same diffusive and boundless goodness that first breathed in us the breath of life, and framed us in his own Likeness and Image, again pitied us in our low estate, and provided the most valuable and Sovereign Remedy to recover us from this mortal disease ; though he has procured a complete Ransom to liberate us from the insupportable slavery and tyranny of sin ; has offered to restore our former beauty, to repossess us of that happiness we had lost, and to make us again Favourites and Freemen ; yet how insolently have we rejected this kind offer ? how impiously have we cut those cords of Love asunder, and refuse to be healed ?

'Tis, indeed, matter of great sadness to consider the lofty and intollerable affronts that are now cast upon Holiness; how men are arrived at that pitch of impiety, to scorn and deride Religion, which former Ages were at some pains to advance; as if Holiness were inconsistent with the Principles of Generosity, and only becoming mean and morose Spirits.

How transcendent a folly and madness this is, will easily appear by what I shall afterwards lay down. Methinks the naked representation of Holiness, should be motive enough (if not to court it, yet) to engage men to correct their unreasonable prejudices they entertain against it; and even force its greatest Antagonists to become its Advocates. But alas! vice hath cast such a dark shadow upon mens Judgments, that they are become as unfit Judges of its beauty, as blind men are of colours; otherwise we might yet expect to see contemned Vertue much more in vogue than ever Vice was.

To excite our desires, Scripture has represented it under the most comely dress, has discovered its beauty and excellency, and recommended it by the most endearing motives which are apt to work both upon our hope and fear: *Upon our*
hope,

hope, by proposing an infinitely-valuable reward to the righteous, besides the present advantages that attend it. *Upon our fear*, by opening to our view *the powers of the world to come*, and discovering the insupportable misery that the damned suffer *day and night*; so that if men would but so far actuate their Reason, as soberly to consult their own interest and happiness, I doubt not but this alone should be motive enough to excite them to the practice of Holiness, and scare them from those ways of sin *that lead down to the chambers of death.*

It would make (one would think) the greatest Sensualist to relinquish the momentary pleasures he enjoys here, to be possess'd of those eternal joys that the pure in Spirit shall reap *in the Kingdom of their Father*: And the most hardened and impregnable sinner tremble, to think of *dwelling with devouring Flames.*

Now the onely infallible way to attain those cœlestial felicities, and to evite the miserable consequences of vice, and those pains and tortures that it exposeth its votaries to, is to abandon every lust, be it never so impetuous, and to *cleanse our selves* (as the Apostle adviseth us) *from all filthiness of the Flesh and Spirit, and to*

perfect Holiness in the fear of God.

For the better directing our present inquisition, I shall *first* briefly represent the *nature* of true *Holiness*, and shew the *beauty* and excellency of it. *Secondly*, I shall discourse of its *Rule*, and more particularly discover the several branches of *Holiness*. *Thirdly*, I shall propound several *motives* and *inducements* to engage men to the practice of *Holiness*; and indeed this is what I chiefly intend to insist upon. *Fourthly*, I shall remove all those *Cavils* and *Objections* that are urged against *Holiness*; And *Lastly*, conclude with some short *Reflections* and *Inferences*.

CHAP.

C H A P. I.

Of the Nature of Holiness.

I Intend not here to descend to the consideration of every particular branch of *Holiness*, but to discourse of it in the general, as it is the combination of all *Christian virtues*. And as it is thus considered, I need not, I think, in the description of it, accurately study all those Logical Rules Philosophers require in a good definition. For my part, it fully enough satisfies me to know, that *holiness* is a conformity to the Divine Law, and a hearty and sincere compliance with those original dictates of humane nature, and the Commands revealed in sacred Writ.

So long as man remained obedient to the Laws of his Maker, his *Holiness* was untainted, and his Beauty and primitive congenite comeliness continued; but by his woful Apostacy he lost that noble embellishment of his nature, which did indeed give a grace to all his other accomplishments, and is now become ugly and deformed. *Holiness* and purity of Spirit are different words, but of the same signification, and are promiscuously used in Scripture to express the same thing.

thing. Opposite to which are *Sin* and *Uncleanness* : *Sin* being that which contaminates the Soul, and robs it of that beauty which formerly did of right belong to it.

Although 'tis not one particular good action that denominates a man *holy* ; yet every wilful aberration from, and transgression of the Law , constitutes man a sinner , and makes him liable to the demerit of the offence. Whosoever therefore intends to perfect *Holiness*, must (according to the Apostle's advice) *cleanse himself from all filthiness of the Flesh and Spirit, abstain from every appearance of evil,* and sincerely endeavour to perform all good actions.

In a word, Holiness in its general notion, is the comprehensive Sum of the Moral Law ; and may be very aptly described to be *a ceasing from evil, and doing good* ; which in this lapsed estate consists in the sincerity of our intentions and actions ; and shall be perfected when *mortality is swallowed up of life* , when those imperfections and spots that attend our natural state , shall be quite removed and done away. So long as our Souls actuate their impure bodies , sins and infirmities will cleave to the best : An absolute innocence and

and perfect *Holiness* is reserved for that state, where all things are become new. But yet so far as the frailty of our nature, and the imperfection of our present state will suffer, we ought sincerely to study to walk (as it is said of *Zacharias* and *Elizabeth*) in all the commandments of God blameless; the general course and tenour of our lives should correspond and keep a conformity with the divine precepts, which, as I shall just now shew, are the *Rule of Holiness*.

Almighty God, who well considers the nature of man, does not esteem men to be either vicious or holy, from the performance of some particular acts: *There is not a just man who liveth and sinneth not.* It is the peculiar motto of our Lord Christ, That *he did no sin, neither was there guile found in his mouth.* But the imperfect obedience of good men, who in the general course of their life sincerely study an universal conformity and respect to the divine Laws, is esteemed by him who judgeth righteously to be sufficient in order to our acceptance with him, upon the account of the merits and perfect obedience of our blessed Saviour. The wise God, who considers the frailties and imperfections that attend our present

present state, expects not more from us than we are able to perform. He is not so rigorous a Lord to require *Brick where there is no Straw*: The terms of the Gospel are accommodated to our capacities, and only require a *Holiness* which is possible for the Creature to attain; at least it exacts and expects no more, but that we endeavour sincerely and unfeignedly to obey all those precepts he has enjoined; that we habituate our selves to perform good actions; that the general propension and inclination of our Wills and Appetites be towards the doing of what is imposed upon us, and abstaining from all kind of evil.

By what hath been said, it may appear, that *Holiness* consists not in Speculation, but in Practice: 'Tis not the knowledge of duty, but the actual performance of it that entitles men to be holy; and that too, not superficially or in a good mode, and rarely performed; but sincerely, and throughout the whole course of our lives. For men to know their duty and not perform it, is to inhanche their own misery, and to secure to themselves double stripes: And to perform some good actions, and abstain from the grosser pollutions of the world, and yet to be vicious in the general

neral course of their lives, this is such a holiness that will never profit any man. The *rule of Holiness*, to which we must heartily study an actual conformity, does not dispense, no not with the commission of the least sin, nor omission of the smallest duty.

But because general descriptions of things are frequently overlooked, I shall not think it unnecessary to descend to a more particular survey, and consider *Holiness* in its several branches, as they are plainly described by the Christian Rule of Holiness.

CHAP. II.

Of the Rule of Holiness.

Although the whole Canon of Scripture is useful to instruct us in our duty; yet because many things, if not approved, yet dispensed with under the old dispensation, are now quite antiquated and abrogate, I shall therefore at present confine my discourse to the Gospel-Oeconomy, and by the *Rule* discover wherein the Nature of true *Holiness*, and undefiled Religion before God consists.

I am a little confident, it will not be expected I should prove that the New Testament is of Divine Authority, and consequently an infallible *rule* to direct us in the way of *Holiness*: The numerous late Discourses, which have excellently well performed this task, against the prodigiously prophane Atheists this impure Age hath to its lasting reproach hatched, makes me without the least fear of censure supersede this undertaking.

I shall take it then for granted, (it being acknowledged by all rational men) that the Gospel is the great and certain Standard whereby we may truly judge of any man's *Holiness*; and never doubt to conclude, that he who in the general course and tenour of his life, walks contrary to the *Rule*, can lay no claim, plead no interest to the Title of *Holiness*; this being no other thing (as I have already shewed) but a combination of those virtues the Gospel-Precepts enjoin.

Now the Precepts of Christianity which point us our duty, may, for brevity, be reduced to these three general Heads. For *first*, they are either such as enjoin Piety towards God. *Secondly*, or such that require the good government of our selves. Or *Thirdly*, those that prescribe our

our carriage and behaviour towards others. Of these I shall take a brief survey ; and as I go along, excite men to the practice of every particular duty, by rational motives and inducements ; and withal discover the perfection and completeness of the *Christian Rule*, above all the Institutions that ever were or can be devised.

First, Amongst those *Laws of Christianity* which enjoin Piety towards God, we find Love to him standing in the Front, and claiming the Precedency. This is (as our blessed Saviour informs us) *the first and great Commandment*, it being indeed the source and original of all Acts of Obedience.

To excite our Love, let us but present to our view his infinite and transcendent perfections, the undeserved favours he every minute bestows upon us, the innumerable dangers and accidents we are daily preserved from : Arguments forcible enough to draw Love from the most rocky and obdurate heart. 'Tis indeed an amazing thing, to see those into whom he has breathed the Breath of life, on whom he has rained so many floods of favours, to remain notwithstanding as frozen, as ground which the Sun-rays never

ver touch. 'Tis an odd and strange operation, that streams of Love only meet with contempt and disdain.

Sure I am, there is a concurrence of all sorts of Motives and Arguments to engage us to love God; and those indeed so charming and endearing, that it is strange any body should fail in it. Methinks the work it self is so sweet and delectable, so ravishing and lovely, that men need not be courted to it by perswasion. O what a great deal of satisfaction, of ineffable delight, does the devout Soul find in in those actings of love towards God! And if the Voluptuous and Sensualist would but abandon those sinful delights he now finds so charming and bewitching, and betake himself to the practice of Holiness: If he would change the object of his love, and place it where it ought to be; I doubt not but he should quickly perceive there is more pleasure, more contentment and satisfaction in the love of God, than in the enjoyment of all carnal pleasures.

That man that shall make a just estimate of things, shall be easily convinced there is nothing worthy of love in comparison of God. Alas! the pleasures of this world are but shadows and fancies

cies, which will soon disappear! Its beauty and splendor is but gilded and delusory: And is it reasonable, nay, is it not extreme madness to place the strength of our affections on such uncertain and quickly removed vanities?

The usual Arguments of love amongst men, are Relation, Interest, or the Beauty and Excellency of the Object. Now all these lay much stronger obligations upon us to love God. For Relation; Is he not our Lord and Maker, who gave us life and being, who as a tender Father kindly compassionates our condition, and in our low estate has carefully minded us, when our other Relations have accounted us Aliens and Strangers? This the Royal Psalmist experimented; and I make no question but many good men have been, and are living instances of this truth.

And indeed, that man that consults his own interest, cannot but be strongly excited to love that God who is the best benefactor, and equally willing and able to bestow favours upon him. It is an Argument of a very base and mean Spirit, to despise our Benefactors: But thus have we requited God, who daily loadeth us with mercies, and reneweth his blessings every

every morning : We have, God knows, most insolently carried our selves , even then, when he has been displaying a banner of love over us.

*As for Beauty and Excellency , what in the world can compete with him, who is glorious in Holiness, and whose Name is excellent in all the Earth ? How quickly are all created Beauties winked into darkness ? At the best they are but streams derived from this glorious being ; and is it not hugely reasonable, that he who is the Original of these, should be the chief Object of our Love ; and make us with the Psalmist say, *Whom have I in the heaven but thee ; and there is none upon the earth I desire besides thee ?**

I know there is no man would take it well, nay who would not be highly incensed, and think himself much wronged, to have his Love called in question ; but God knows how little reason the far greater part of Mankind have to pretend Love, who stand not to break his Laws, to cast behind them, and lightly esteem his Precepts, the obedience of which is made the best and surest Character of Love.

Would God it were as easie to perswade as it is to propose our duty. But how hard

hard is it to convince men of the folly, the extreme and strange madness, of being *lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God*? But the truth is, there is such a mire and puddle of pollution in our hearts, that it quite choaks and extinguisheth all sparks of love, makes us violate the principles of humanity, and become more ungrate than the Beasts who have no understanding.

But if this Divine Flame be kindled in our Hearts, if it be sincere and superlative as it ought to be, it will easily employ all the faculties of our Soul in his service; it will engage and enable us too, to perform the several duties of Piety the Laws of Christianity enjoyn; which because they are some of the particular branches of *Holiness*, I shall briefly mention with their encouragements; and for method and order reduce to four heads. *First*, it will instruct and enable us to trust and depend upon God. *Secondly*, to submit and obey his Will. *Thirdly*, to honour and reverence his great and sacred Name. And *Lastly*, to worship and adore him according to the method he hath himself prescribed.

I begin with the first, namely, that Love where it is sincere, is a noble and generous

rous passion, apt to excite and enable us to depend on God. This is, I confess, a duty very useful, and never out of season: The Psalmist wisely adviseth us, *to trust in him at all times*; when we are in the midst of all trouble, as well as when our condition is serene, and wholly exempt from outward fears. When the Divine Providence hath placed us in the most dismal circumstances, even in this sad and comfortless state, our fears ought to give place to faith; we would do well to repose a special confidence in him, who is hereby become engaged to secure and defend us. This method the excellent Psalmist observed, and resolved constantly to heed in times of imminent danger: *What time I am afraid I will trust in thee*, Psal. 56. 3. And we find that faithful men in former times took this course also: *We know not what to do, only our eyes are to thee*, 2 Chron. 20. 12.

+ In this lapsed state we lye open to a multitude of Accidents; every place is attended with dangers, our enemies are as subtle and cunning as they are strong and numerous. The Prince of the power of the Air has his wit always upon the Rack, in inventing stratagems and devices to undo us; and his Emissaries slip no opportunity

tunity of our ruine : And is there a safer course than to *trust in Jehovah, who is everlasting strength?* who is indeed, as the Psalmist says, *a present help in time of need.* Sure I am, it is mans greatest interest to flee to the Divine Providence, which is the best guard against all dangers ; for we need not doubt to conclude with the Apostle, *If God be for us, who can be against us?*

'Tis also the Law of Heaven, that in times of want we confide in God, 1 Peter 5. 6. *Cast all your care upon him, for he careth for you.* I confess, we must not expect to be fed miraculously, to have the *Ravens* to bring bread and flesh to us morning and evening, or that the meal in our Barrel should increase and never waste, but be multiplied as the Loaves and Fish were by our Saviour : We must not foolishly dream that Manna shall fall about our Tents, when we may use the lawful means ; this sure were rather a tempting of, than trusting in God. But yet, after we have experimented all lawful means and probable ways, and find it utterly impossible for us to help ourselves ; then we may safely repose our confidence upon him, *who feeds the young Ravens when they cry unto him.* Therefore

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(says

(says our Lord) *I say unto you, Take no thought for your life, what you shall eat, or what you shall drink; neither for your body, what ye shall put on: Is not the life more than meat? and the body than raiment? Behold the Fowls of the Air, for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; yet your Heavenly Father feedeth them. Are ye not much better than they? &c. Matth. 6. 25, 26.* 'Tis rejected and condemned as a Pagan and Heathenish Sin, to be querulous and solicitous of *what we shall eat, or what we shall drink, or wherewithal we shall be clothed: for after all these things do the Gentiles seek,* v. 31, 32.

I confess, as I cannot sufficiently enough pity the madness of some men, who will trust God with their Souls, but not with their secular Concerns; so could I never yet project what may be the reason why better men than the former are so apt to distrust God in times of danger and want. I wish such men would consider how shrewd a presumption this is of Atheism, at least of establishing the Epicurean notion of a Deity who is quite unconcerned about inferior beings, and sequestered from the care of sublunary Affairs. For if we did indeed think that he takes notice

tice of us, we could not but confidently rely upon his care.

Secondly, we are by the perfect rule of Piety and Holiness instructed to submit to the divine Will, and comply with the Gospel-precepts, which concerning all things are right. Perhaps the lot infinite Wisdom has carved out to us, is no ways relishing to flesh and blood. Whilst others are walking amongst Roses, enjoy all secular advantages, and are placed in the Sunshine of prosperity; may be, we are forced to hang our Harps upon the Willows, and spend our few days in sorrow and grief. However, let us, not even under these sad circumstances, charge God foolishly, or be impatient under the severity of his Correction; for this is no Argument of the hatred of a Father. Let us rather in this case view the unspeakable reward, and the divine promises, which are sufficient arguments to revive our fainting and most languishing hopes, and able to form our souls to true patience.

Philosophers, if ever they attained to a perfection in any vertue, it was in their patience under the instability of worldly things; and yet their grounds and motives to patience were sandy and ineffectual, and no ways comparable to the arguments

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and inducements laid down in the scheme of Christian Religion. *Epicurus* his calling to mind his former pleasures, was but a weak plea to form him to patience under the tormenting pains of the Gout. And the *Stoicks* notion that sufferings were no real evils, was *really* a fancy easily conquered by the extremity of pain.

And as we are thus obliged to submit to the severest dispensation of Providence, so we ought to comply with the Divine Will exhibited in his Precepts. *Obedience* is undoubtedly the best Evidence of Love ; *for hereby is our love manifested, that we do his will :* and indeed the Divine Injunctions are all so natural, so equitable and just, that we can alledge no impossibility in performing them. *His Commands*, as the Apostle informs us, *are not grievous*, 1 Joh. 4. 3. They require not things incommodious and burthensom, as the most of other Religions do.

The third duty we are instructed in, is to reverence and honour his sacred Name, to have apprehensions and affections suitable to his glorious perfections. When we seriously reflect on the purity of his nature, and the infinity of his cognizance ; our esteem and veneration of him should be truly elevated , and raised as high as possible,

possible, and make us with *Moses* (in a holy rapture) say, *Who is like unto thee, O Lord, among the Gods! who is like thee, glorious in Holiness, fearful in praises, doing wonders?* *Exod. 15. 11.*

How impious then and unlawful is it, to prophane and violate the sacred Name of that God we should adore, by a multitude of rash and customary oaths! Sure those who own any relation to that God who is so dishonoured, will be so generous as to express their displeasure, when in company with those who thus revile him. But if God be so friendless as to have none to appear thus for him, yet such prophane wretches may know, that God himself will resent those injuries and affronts put upon him; he will vindicate his own glory of which he is so jealous, and surely *will not hold them guiltless that take his Name in vain.*

Of all sins, this of Swearing is the most unreasonable, and cannot pretend the ordinary incentives of Pleasure or Profit, that most of vices lay some claim to. How desperate a phrensie then is it, for men without any probability of allurements, to draw down upon themselves the vengeance of an incensed God? 'Tis sure but a mean apology, to alledge an

habit and custom, while this is the very thing that enhances their guilt: Neither will it, I think, a whit lessen the crime, that great persons have given it such a vogue in the world.

The Name of God is a sacred thing, which must not be appealed to, but in the most weighty and serious cases: *Thou shalt swear* (says the Prophet) *that the Lord liveth, in truth, justice, and judgement.* If we either affirm or promise any thing by Oath, it must be after mature deliberation, after we have ascertained our selves of the truth and lawfulness of it: This the very Poet

*Nec Deus interfit, nisi dignus vindice nodus
Inciderit* —

It were to be wished, that the Hectors of this Age would learn of the very Heathens more reverence; and that those men that pretend to good breeding, would be so civil, even sometimes for the companies sake, as to forbear those Oaths that tender ears cannot hear without offence.

In the last place, the Divine Love, if scattered in our Hearts, will excite us to worship God after the method himself hath prescribed; It will direct us to the rule

rule of Piety, where we shall find every thing that relates to our immediate intercourse with God in Divine Ordinances and Worship exactly ordered. I confess, the Heathen world, as they were confused in their Notions of a Deity, and almost quite ignorant of the eternal reward; so were they superstitious in their Worship, and sometimes ignorantly erected Altars to *an unknown God*. Their Worship was attended with a great deal of external pomp, was very grateful to their external senses; but it reached not the Heart. But the Christian Rule instructs us to worship God in Spirit, and prescribes the best method of devotion: It requires that *We worship and bow before the Lord our maker*, with all possible humility and reverence; that we possess our Hearts with the greatness and glory of that Majesty we adore; that we be intent in our devotion, and not suffer secular concerns to intrude and interrupt us; that we act faith upon him, and believe that *he is a rewarder of those that diligently seek him*; and that we approach the Throne of Grace *in the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ*.

If Devotion were not a duty, yet methinks the advantages thereof should invite

vite us to the performance : But since God has coupled our duty and interest together, how amazing is it to think we should so neglect it ? How many attractives are there to approach his presence, *who dwells in light inaccessible* ? Have we not a multitude of sins to confess ? many wants we would fain have suppli'd ? How many Temptations does every place present ? How numerous are the dangers and accidents to which we lye open ? and should not all these excite us to render homage to that omnipotent power, which alone can guard us from inconveniencies ? But besides our dangers we are freed from, the mercies and favours he daily confers upon us, the fresh communications of his bounty every morning, nay minute, require at least a return of praise, and a grateful acknowledgment. But yet alas ! in spite of all these inducements, how is Devotion contemned by some, and neglected by most ?

But I dare not enlarge now on the particular Branches of *Holiness*, nor insist in the recommendation of every particular duty, lest I seem to digress from my proper subject. I shall therefore proceed to the other two Branches of *Holiness*, namely, those duties that respect our selves and others.

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As to the first, we are by the perfect Rule of Holiness instructed to live soberly, to be moderate in all things, and to shun every kind of excess, as equally hurtful to Soul and Body : It forbids Complacency in those lusts that war against both ; restrains all irregular and impetuous inclinations ; retrenches all inordinate desires, the first motions to forbidden objects, and, in a word, enjoyns all those vertues which respect either our Bodies or Souls.

For those that respect our Bodies, how straitly is chastity commanded? For this is the will of God, even your sanctification, that ye should abstain from fornication, 1 Thess. 4. 3. We are urged with the most affectionate earnestness, to abstain from the very first motions to forbidden objects, from the polluted glances and wanton lascivious speeches that are windows at which uncleanness enters ; and that by such invincible and cogent Arguments, as might prove effectual with men who but consider what they do ; Lust being a vice mischievous to the body, Prov. 7. 26. hurtful to the Soul, Prov. 6. 32. casting an everlasting stain upon a mans good Name, Prov. 6. 33. undoing his Substance, Prov. 6. 26. Job 31. 12. and

and that which finally excludes from the Kingdom of Heaven, where nothing that pollutes can enter, 2 Cor. 6. 9. Rev. 21. 27.

'Tis indeed no wonder though the Religion of the Gentiles, which contained a prodigious mixture of vanity and impiety, gratified the inclinations of uncleanness; for if we consult their writings, we shall observe, that the most abominable vice wanted not a Deity to patronize it amongst them; which upon the matter was *an establishing iniquity by Law*, and an argument more sufficient to encourage than to correct Vice; And although the Writings of some Philosophers have been more refined, yet the Lives even of such were full of the foulest actions. Nay, the rules which the best Masters of Morality amongst them prescribed, never reached to the purifying of the Heart.

I confess, that man that shall take notice (and who, having eyes in his head, can evite this, when men proclaim their sin like *Sodom*?) of the prodigious uncleanness this prophane Age has arrived at, shall be strongly tempted to suspect the purity of the Christian Rule, if he make no farther enquiry than to the practices of most that are called Christians. We may indeed

indeed very aptly write to the professors of this Age, as the great Apostle did to the Church of *Corinth*: *It is reported commonly that there is fornication among you, and such fornication as is not so much as named amongst the Gentiles*, 1 Cor. 5. 1. And I am a little afraid, if the Church should strictly observe that charge that the Apostle gives there, and excommunicate all such wicked persons, that our Church should not need to brag much of the number of Christians.

'Tis indeed matter of great sadness, to consider how much the Christian Religion has suffered, upon the account of the scandalous practices of Titular Christians; and I make no doubt but this Age has been at more pains than any that precedes it, to increase the scandal: But sure 'tis but a silly Artifice to challenge the exactness of the *Rule*, and with *Celsus* impudently alledge that the Christian Religion encourageth men to the practice of immorality and vice, since of all Religions, the Christian only can produce the strictest Laws against *all filthiness of Flesh and Spirit*. 'Tis a *Doctrine*, as the blessed Apostle tells us, *according to Godliness*, and lays undispensible obligations upon its followers, both to think upon, and to do,
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whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are of good report, and such like things, which being general, include all particulars; and yet it doth not only prescribe general rules, but descendeth to the commanding of all particular vertues, and the equal prohibition of particular vices.

Next to Chastity, we might discourse large of the commendation of Moderation in eating and drinking, and shew that the excess of both is condemned, as being mean and ignoble; that it is the true cause of many loathsome diseases, is attended with a prodigious multitude of temporal evils, Prov. 23. 22. and threatened with lasting and eternal torments hereafter. Hence our Royal Master fails not to exhort his Disciples, to Take heed to themselves, lest at any time they be overcharged with surfeiting and drunkenness, Luke 21. 34. And one of his blessed Apostles tells us, that Drunkards shall not inherit the Kingdom of God, 1 Cor. 6. 10. And indeed daily experience puts it beyond all doubt, that those ignoble sins naturally tend to impoverish men, and fully verifie the wise mans prediction, That the Drunkard and the Glutton shall come to poverty, Prov. 23. 21.

But

But passing those vertues that concern our *Bodies*, I come now to consider those that adorn our *Souls*; and I shall confine my discourse to those which are the peculiar graces of Christians, and which the Christian Rule does more particularly recommend: Such as Humility, Meekness, Contentment, and Self-denial.

If we enquire narrowly into the Lives of Heathen Philosophers, we shall find their *pride* and vain-glory stained the best of their Actions. *Self-denial* was a vertue never taught in their Schools; and for *Contentment*, the Rules they prescribed were but ineffectual to recommend it.

But the Gospel couples our Duty and Interest together; it commands *Humility*, and recommends its Advantages and alluring attractives. It discovers the dangers that attend *Pride*; and the great folly of being vain of Beauty, Strength, Wit, Riches, Honours, or Preferments: Of all these I may use the Apostle's phrase, 'Tis not expedient doubtless for men to glory, 2 Cor. 12.7. Are not these the free gifts of Divine goodness? and what can be more unreasonable than for dependent creatures to be proud?

Humility is indeed so amiable, so endearing

dearing a quality, and so noble an imbellishment of our nature, that where this is wanting, all other advantages are little regarded; and not only men, but the Great God also *resists the proud*, it being a vice which, besides Christianity, Morality also condemns, as universally unbecoming to Humane Nature; and that which not only disturbs ones self, but also disquiets whole societies: But *God gives grace to the humble*; he takes such persons into favour, as being more pliable to receive the impress of his love.

And as a humble, so also a meek and quiet spirit is in the sight of God of great price. And can there be a more convincing motive than this, to recommend meekness to Christians? And indeed we cannot pretend to be the Disciples of Holy Jesus, if we refuse to learn that lesson he hath copied out to us, *Matth. 11. 29. Learn of me, for I am meek and lowly in heart,*

Although a calm and quiet spirit is a reward to it self, as every vertue is; yet it wants not a claim to a temporal felicity also, Matth. 5. 5. Blessed are the meek; for they shall inherit the earth. These be the persons to whom by right of promise this stately Fabrick of Earth belongs.

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And if we now view that unpleasant vice of *Anger* opposite to it, this will yet add more to its lustre, and help to recommend it the more effectually. *Anger* being such an unpleasant humour, that it makes those men it possesses unfit for humane society, it being not unfitly defined by the Poet to be a *short madness*; which indeed agrees very well with the Wise Mans verdict of it, *Eccl. Anger rests in the bosom of Fools*. If then men would but compare the calm and happy serenity of Meekness, with that inward and outward trouble and disquietment that is the effect of Anger, they could not but esteem the one, and declaim against the other.

In the next place, our *Christian Rule* recommends *Contentment* as the most precious Jewel in the Saints Diadem; 'tis that noble ingredient that makes the most bitter cup sweet and pleasant: It renders things, otherwise unfavoury and burthensome, to be indeed relishing and easie. This is it that seasons the meanest meal; makes a dish of Herbs a Feast, and a Cup of cold Water please the Palate: This is that vertue which makes men in the midst of Storms represent a Calm, and in the saddest circumstances to sing sweetly. He

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who has learned St. Paul's lesson *how to want, and how to abound*, is not discomposed either by Prosperity or Adversity; but in both cases can behave himself like a man in reason. This is it which is inseparably connected with Godliness, is the same thing expressed by different names. This is a virtue so lovely and desirable, attended with so many advantages, that we have all imaginable encouragements to hearken to the Apostle's advice, *Heb. 13. 5. Be content with such things as ye have*; and in the evil day to heed that advice Christ gives his Disciples, *to possess our souls with patience*.

But how disquieting and tormenting are its contraries? *Ambition* makes men restless in raising their own value and esteem above others; it prompts them to be always in dislike with their own present condition; the least advancement of others above them, gnaws and torments their spirits, and oftentimes hurries them headlong to the greatest dangers. *Murmuring* is a most fretting evil, a most painful distemper, a sin attended with the most dangerous consequents, and which embittereth the happiest state of life here. *Envy* is a vice nothing less criminal, attended with as dismal effects as any, as the Apostle

Apostle St. James tells, *Jam. 3. 16. Where envying and strife is, there is confusion and every evil work.* And lastly, *Covetousness* is so mean and ignoble a vice, that I think although it were not (as the Apostle describes it) *the root of all evil*; yet, gallant spirits should dislike it, as being base and contemptible.

In the last place, the Gospel recommends *Self-denial* as the Christians peculiar Character: *If any man (says our Master Christ) will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his Cross and follow me*: And this precept he backs with the most powerful incitement; *For whosoever will save his life shall lose it, and whosoever will lose his life for my sake, shall find it*, Mat. 16. 24, 25. I doubt not but flesh and blood will cry out, as once Christ's own Disciples did in another case, *This is a hard saying, who can bear it?* 'Tis indeed no small matter to bring down the carnal part of man to submit to the loss of Relations, Interest, and Life: But since the advantage and danger of both cases is so clearly revealed, what fools will men prove, if to gain this life, they lose the recompence of a better reward?

As the Rule of Holiness does thus instruct

struct us in those duties that concern our selves ; so it also teacheth us how to carry towards others. And in the first place , it recommends the *Royal Law of love*, as the spring and source of all other duties, *Rom. 13. 9.* *If there be any other Commandment , 'tis briefly comprehended in this saying, namely, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thy self.* This, for its excellency and comprehensiveness, is said to be *the fulfilling of the Law*, as those who neglect it are said to *sin against the Law*.

Now if this Rule of Charity were well observed , it would help to correct, first, all undue Thoughts and Wishes. Secondly, all injurious Words and Speeches. And Thirdly, all unjust Actions and dealings towards our Neighbours.

First, It would very much conduce to the Regulating of our wishes, and to the keeping of our minds in a meek and peaceable temper towards others. Charity, if sincere, is a noble and generous Vertue, which believeth and hopeth the best of all men : *It thinketh no evil*, as the Apostle amongst many of its other good properties observeth, *2 Cor. 13. 5.* It eradicates and supplants all censorious thoughts, and is incompatible with those
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tormenting passions of Malice and Revenge which, as the wise man describes, *suffer not men to sleep except they have done mischief*, Prov. 4. 16.

And indeed this is but the least part of a Christians duty, 'tis but an evidence of the lowest degree of Charity, to retrench those irregular and undue wishes, which oftentimes do more prejudice to our selves than others : If it be sincere, it will have a further and more important influence ; it will help us to govern our Tongues also, that we may, as the great Apostle adviseth us, *speake evil of no man*, Tit. 3. 2. *to lay aside all malice and all guile, and hypocrisie, and evil speaking*, 1 Pet. 2. 1. and according to this Precept did Primitive Christians walk.

But alas ! we have degenerated in nothing more conspicuously from their practise than in this : In place of their love, we have substituted an industrious search into the iniquities of others, *Psal. 64. 4.* and have fully verified the Apostles description of the Tongue, *Jam. 3. 8.* that it is *an unruly evil which no man can tame, a world of iniquity that sets the whole Creation on fire.*

Neither Majesty nor Innocency can now guard against its darts ; its malignity reach-

reacheth through all the Earth ; nay indeed it were good if it were bounded by this. May not the Majesty of Heaven resume that same complaint he expresth, *Mal. 3. 14. Your words have been stout against me; and charge the prophane Atheists of this Age, for opening their mouths against the Heavens?*

As for Innocency, although it is truly in it self a strong fence, yet it cannot escape the assaults of a licentious tongue ; but with the Psalmist may complain: *Behold, they belch out with their mouths, Swords are in their lips*, *Psal. 56. 7.* And I think there are few men so happy who cannot with the same holy man regret, *They lay to my charge things I know not* : But how much this violates all the obligations of Charity and Justice also, every mans reason will easily instruct him.

To secure men from being culpable in this, it were enough only to represent the meanness of it ; but as a more noble enforcement, the Gospel prescribes the strictest rules against it, *Matth. 7. 1, 2. Judge not, that ye be not judged ; for with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged.* A sentence which methinks should even strike terrour in the Consciences of the guilty ; and sure if men would but
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mind their own concern and interest, they should more attentively hearken to the Counsel of the Apostle, *Eph. 4.31,32. Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice. And be ye kind one to another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christs sake hath forgiven you.*

But our love must not consist in word only, but *in deed and in truth*, as the blessed Apostle exhorts the Primitive Christians *1 Joh. 3.18.* It is a vain thing to pretend love, when we refuse to evidence it by our deeds: *If a Brother or Sister be naked, and destitute of daily food; and one of you say unto them, Depart in peace, be you warmed and filled, notwithstanding ye give them not those things which are needful to the body, what doth it profit? Jam. 2.15,16.* We must make our Actions and dealings the Test whereby we may evidence our love, otherwise the sincerity of it may be justly suspected; and therefore in the first place, we must actually endeavour to supply the wants of our indigent Brethren: This is above all things recommended to Christians, *1 Pet. 4. 8.* especially to those who have received a large allowance of out-

ward blessings, v. 10. And it is noted as an Evidence that *the love of God dwelleth not in those persons*, who *having this worlds goods, shut up their Bowels of Compassion from those that have need*, 1 John 3. 17. Alas ! little do men know how quickly the Balance may change ; how soon the richest may be in poverty, and stand in need of that supply that they now in the days of their plenty deny others : The instances to prove this, are more numerous than that they can be doubted, or need to be related.

Indeed the performance of this duty passeth not without a temporal reward ; God, who accounts it a lending to himself, hath promised to repay it ; and sure there cannot be better security than his promise. And I question not but all Ages can attest the truth of what the Wise Man observeth, Prov. 11. 24. There is that scattereth, and yet increaseth ; and there is that withholdeth more than is meet, but it tendeth to poverty.

I confess, I know no vertue more becoming a Christian than Charity, and scarce any more scandalously neglected ; and I am sorry to think that those good men who compassionate the wants of the indigent, should be so unworthily scandalized,

dalized, as if they were but lukewarm Protestants, and established the Popish Merit: But this is a piece of madness I shall rather pity than inveigh against; and although I be no friend to merit, yet I cannot but speak honourably of those whose charity and good works make them lovely in the sight of God, who has accounted it *pure Religion and undefiled, to visit the Fatherless and Widows in their affliction*, Jam. 1. 27.

In the next place, the *Christian Rule* requires *Justice* in our intercourse and commerce, and that in our dealings we be exactly conscientious, according to that great rule of Equity, *Matth. 7. 12.* *All things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them; for this is the Law and the Prophets.* Injustice is a Vice so mean and ignoble, that I cannot but admire how great men should court it: And if Men would but actuate their Reasons, I am sure they should never become guilty of that which, if charged with, they cannot patiently endure, nor be reconciled with the Persons which freely reprove them. There is no man, I think, that would be satisfied to be called a Cheat; and is it not unreasonable to think they shall evite this Character who practise injustice?

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The great Bait and Allurement to Injustice, is Gain and Advantage ; but how visibly hath Almighty God by a wise providence defeated mens designs in this ! There is (as Eliphaz observed) a Fire that consumeth the Tabernacles of Bribery, Job 15. 34. And as the wise man tells us, An Inheritance may be gotten hastily at the beginning, but the end thereof shall not be blessed, Prov. 20. 21.

*Thirdly, The Christian Rule is a most compendious and complete directory to men in every Station and Place : Parents and Children, Masters and Servants, Husband and Wife , may from hence learn their duty. As it gives no Encouragement to Tyrants, so neither does it allow Rebellion in Subjects ; but condemns it as a sin hainous and unnatural. But I cannot stand to enlarge upon every particular duty ; only I shall infer, that from the accomplishment of those duties enjoyned by the *Christian Rule*, is formed that *Holiness* I would fain perswade men to follow.*

To put a close to this Chapter, it will not, I think, be amiss to shew, that the Christian Rule of Holiness is the most noble and most excellent that was ever extant ; that it far excells the Schemes of Mor-

Morality drawn by the best and most celebrated Masters of Pagan Philosophy, and is more comprehensive and effectual to form men to true Holiness than the Mo-
saical Law.

I confess, the Heathen Religion does not in the least deserve to be compared with the Christian, no more (I may say, much less) than the light of the dimmest Candle should be compared with the Sun in its brightness, when all Mists and Clouds are dispelled. It were indeed too great an honour to name the *Alcoran* with the *New Testament*; the one being corrupt and imperfect, the other pure and perfect in its tendency, designing to make men truly vertuous and holy.

If we view the rules which the best and most refined Moralists prescribed, we shall find much Brass amongst their Gold, many things exceedingly faulty, which, instead of forbidding, encouraged many foul vices. Thus concerning Piety towards God, what unbecoming thoughts did they entertain of him? *They changed* (as the Apostle to the *Romans* observes) *the Glory of an incorruptible God into an Image made like corruptible man*, Rom. i. 23. And in those moral duties that concerned themselves and others, it
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were easie to shew how miserably they failed. The famous Peripatetick pleaded for the revenging of Injuries: The Divine *Plato* allowed the Community of Wives: The strict *Stoicks* patronized the lawfulness of Self-murder; and thus *professing themselves to be wise, they became Fools.*

And yet (to the shame of Christians) how conspicuous was the moral gallantry of the Romans! how famous and glorious are they esteemed for their Justice and Constancy in Friendship by all succeeding Ages! their vertue did Conquer Respect and Esteem from their Enemies, and made them belov'd by those who fear'd their power. And here I cannot but take notice of St. Augustin's Commendation of the old Romans: Because God (says he) would not bestow Heaven upon the Romans, they being Pagans, he bestowed the Empire of the World upon them, because they were vertuous.

And yet the best rules those Illustrious Heroes and Law-givers taught, are not comparable to the Laws of Christianity, upon these three accounts. First, the Pagan Law is deficient in many things, and many particular Laws mightily tend to the promoting of Vice; their Law-givers being

being ignorant of the Introduction of Sin, never made any Precepts against the first motions to forbidden objects. *Secondly*, those good Laws they taught, are more clearly revealed in the Gospel, *Which hath brought Life and Immortality to Light*. As the Gospel Commands only such things that are good, and forbids only Vice; so it more conspicuously manifests what is good that we may do it, and what is evil, that we may evite it. The good Laws that *Epaminondas* in *Thebes*, *Lycurgus* in *Lacedemon*, and *Aristides* in *Athens* taught, are in the Gospel-Oeconomy more excellently confirmed; and we are now undoubtedly secured, that we do well in observing what is commanded, and in abstaining from what is prohibited; which *Numa Pompilius*, *Marcus Antonius*, and all the Law-Givers either of *Greece* or *Rome*, could never be fully ascertained of. *Thirdly*, We have better encouragements and inducements to obey the Gospel-Precepts than any other Religion prescribes. The best motive to Vertue amongst the Heathens was, that *Vertue is a reward to it self*; that it is the means to be celebrated by after-Ages, and such like; which were but insignificant encouragements, if compared with the eternal and unspeak-

unspeakably glorious reward which Christianity holds forth, and those severe threatenings by which it secures its Laws ; of which I shall speak anon.

As for the *Mosaical Law*, which, next to the Christian, is the most exact and incomparable, there are three reasons why it is not to be compared with it, being so far exceeded by the Gospel. *First*, the Mosaical dispensation is not unfitly called by the great Apostle, *A Law of a Carnal Commandment*, Heb. 7. 16. and *A Law which made nothing perfect*, v. 19. But the Gospel, which is there called *the bringing in of a better hope*, is more spiritual and refined ; and *Jesus* is said to be a *Surety of a better Covenant*, v. 22. So that we may argue as the Apostle in the eleventh verse of that cited Chapter doth : *If therefore perfection were by the Levitical Priesthood, (for under it the people received the Law) what further need was there that another Priest should arise ?* I confess, the Legal Sacrifices did shadow forth the satisfaction of Christ ; but yet I make no doubt but we may now understand the intent and meaning of all those *Types* much better than they could. *Secondly*, the *Ceremonial Law*, as it was very burthensome, so did it chiefly tend to make the observers

observers thereof externally righteous, and did not so strongly enforce the purifying of the Heart. As for the *Moral Law*, the Christian Rule as it does as strictly enjoyn it, so it does much more powerfully excite men to the performance of it, promising not a temporal but an eternal reward. *Thirdly*, the Mosaical dispensation did indulge many practices which the Christian Rule justly condemns; such as Polygamy and Divorce, and several marriages allowed by no other Law: And indeed the whole contexture of the Jewish Religion seems to be only calculate as it did well correspond with the humour and Genius of that People, and could not therefore be a general Law, agreeing with, and well temperate to the inclinations and humours of all Nations, as the Christian Rule is.

Any man that shall compare the Jewish Religion with the Christian, shall be easily convinced that this does more effectually conduce to the purifying of us from all filthiness both of the Flesh and of the Spirit than the former; and that of all the Schemes of Religion that ever were published, none does deserve to be parallel'd with Christianity; nor can adopt to them that noble Character the great Apostle

He gives of the Gospel, *Rom. i. 16.* *That it is the power of God to Salvation.*

CHAP. III.

Motives and Inducements to the practice of Holiness.

AS the naked proposal and representation of an excellent and beautiful object, is motive enough to excite our love, and draw out our affections to it ; so methinks *Holiness*, which of all things is the most noble, most excellent, and the most lovely, should, even abstracted from the considerations of its Utility and Advantages, conquer our esteem. But God knows how much our depraved Natures in this lapsed Estate stand in need of encouragements to excite us to our duty ; and I wish common experience did not make it too certain, that all motives are little enough to form us to Holiness.

In the former Chapters I have only laid a Foundation to this ; for I thought it fit to tell men what I understand by Holiness, before I should excite them to it. In this dark Age of the World we want not instances (God knows, too many) of mens too frequent mistaking Vice for Vertue,

vertue ; to prevent which error , it was thought necessary to shew men their duty ; and having done this, the next thing I propos'd, was to lay down several motives and inducements to engage men to the practice of Holiness , founded solely upon this , that all those endearing Arguments that prevail with us to perform any duty or action relating to our secular concerns, do more powerfully oblige us to be holy.

This is, I confess, a subject which for its nobleness deserves a better judgment, a more clear wit, and a more enlivened and quick fancy to handle it than I can pretend to ; yet if I can but prevail with others to perfect what I have begun, I shall not think I have much misemployed my time in writing this discourse.

This Chapter is like to be somewhat disproportionable to the rest in length, it being at first the only designed Subject to be discours'd on ; I shall therefore divide it into several Sections.

S E C T. I.

The noble Pattern of Holiness.

The great inclination of Mankind to Imitation , gave ground (I doubt not)

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to that old Maxim, *Plus doctent exempla quam præcepta* ; our depraved Natures are very apt to contemn Precepts , and to Court forbidden Objects : The tye of a Commandment is become (by our increased guilt) too weak to bind us to our duty, and is made as light of, as *Sampson* made of those Ropes with which he was bound before his locks were cut. But O what a secret and powerful influence have Examples on the spirits of Men ! I have seen Servants and Children who have contemned Commands, yet shamed to their duty by the Example of their Masters and Parents. The Courage and Valour of a Captain, proves frequently more powerful to inspirit inferiour Soldiers, than the most forcible injunctions, and helps to make even Cowards stout ; while as a timorous Commander disheartens the bravest Soldiers, and by his flight will make them who feared no danger turn their backs.

Common Experience makes it past doubt, that the Patrociny and Example of great men is enough to render any thing fashionable. We daily have proofs of this before our eyes ; nay, so powerful do examples sometimes prove, that not only the silly modes and gestures of men have been

been imitated, but also their natural imperfections, as *Nero's* wry Neck was at *Rome*. It is the Poet's observation:

Regis ad exemplum totus componitur orbis.

Upon which account, I heartily wish the Nobles and Great Men of this Age would illustrate Holiness by their examples; and I doubt not but contemned Holiness should be as fashionable as they have now made Vice by their patrociny. In sacred Writ we read, that when the Rulers of *Judah* and *Israel* were Religious, and examples of Vertue, that the whole People imitated their footsteps, and worshipped the Lord God of their Fathers: But when the Rulers became Patrons of Vice, then the whole people sacrificed in the high places, and worshipped their Calves at *Dan* and *Bethel*.

It is indeed a case that well deserves to be regretted with floods of tears, that the footsteps of those who transgress, should prove more efficacious and effectual, and have a greater influence on men, than the presidents of good men: But more lamentable is it, that despised Vertue lies like the contemned Ashes on the level, and has so few to raise up its esteem by their examples.

And now, seeing Examples have so much force, methinks I hear the Captain of our Salvation saying, as *Abimelech* said to the men that were with him, *Judg. 9. 48. Make hast, and do as I have done.* Christ Jesus hath by his Example taught us our duty, *1 Pet. 1. 15, 16. As he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation; because it is written, Be ye holy as I am holy.* Upon which account we are seriously exhorted in Scripture to look unto Jesus, and to walk as he walked; and can any consideration more abundantly serve to inspire and excite us to live holy, than this? Methinks our having so brave an example should provoke us to follow his footsteps, *who did no Sin, neither was guile found in his mouth.*

There are two chief reasons that greatly prevail with us to imitate other examples. *First*, The dignity and greatness of the Person. *Secondly*, Interest and Advantage. Now both these motives should most powerfully prevail with us to make Christ the copy of our lives: For *First*, if we consider the *dignity* and worth of his Person, is he not the Son of the living God, who in the days of his humiliation thought it no robbery to be called equal

equal with God? He was not a Person of a mean and low Extraction, how meanly soever he lived here, but one of extraordinary worth, who by partaking of Humane Nature elevated it to the highest degree of honour: He was not only *the chiefest amongst ten thousands*, but the delight of Heaven and Earth, before whom the Princes of the Earth must appear, and the great men, to give him an account of their works. And as for *Interest*, I shall afterwards make it plain, that we in nothing more cross our advantage, than in walking contrary to Christ.

But alas! how little are we moved by this noble President to mind Holiness? how seldom do we express in our Actions the Vertues of our spiritual King? Although there is nothing more rational, more equitable and just, than to follow his footsteps, who hath called us to his Kingdom and Glory; nothing more honourable, nor can advance our happiness more than to be *conform to the Image of Christ*; yet in opposition to the most endearing Encouragements, we have as much set at nought his Example, as *Herod* and his Men of War did his Person, *Luke 23. 11.* Alas! what tears are sufficient to express and set forth this exceeding great madness and insolvency?

Methinks I hear our blessed Prince speaking thus in his own vindication: Ye unwise and foolish sons of men, how long will ye prefer imperfect and ignoble patterns to one that is every whit perfect and complete? In your secular Concerns ye judge more rationally, prove a thousand times wiser; for who amongst you does not make diligent enquiry for the most exact pattern, that ye may conform what ye design according to it? But in matters of everlasting moment, how careless, how negligent and foolish do ye prove? If I had not been held forth as the most desirable copy, as a pattern most accommodate to your state, your case had been more tollerable; but since you can pretend no rational excuse for your rejecting of me, *Behold, ye despisers, wonder and perish.*

I confess, our blessed Prince performed many extraordinary and miraculous actions, which could have no other Author but one invested with Omnipotency; and although we cannot, are not required to set Christ as our president in these, as likewise in many other special actions he performed, as his fasting forty days, &c. yet even these we are called to admire; and must in so far imitate, as they were

expressions of his great charity and kindness to men, and of his trust and dependancy upon his Heavenly Father. But as for those moral actions he performed, we are extremely culpable if we do not make him our pattern, if we walk not as he walked: And it is sure the most unaccountable thing that can be, to profess our selves to be his Disciples, and to despise the Lessons he hath copied out to us.

The whole life of Christ being one continued Lecture of Holiness, presents to our view a large Field to discourse upon: But my intended brevity will not allow me to mention all those particular Actions and Vertues of his, which we ought to imitate. I shall therefore contract my discourse to those more remarkable instances wherein we should industriously endeavour to imitate the holy Jesus in his Spirit and Actions; and sure there cannot be a more powerful motive to form us to holiness than his most excellent life, which is a pattern absolutely perfect, and designed as a fair Copy after which we should write.

In the first place, our blessed Leader (for so he is called, Isa. 55. 4.) hath by his precept, as well as his practice, enjoyn-

ed us to learn meekness and humility of him, *Matth. 11. 29. Learn of me for I am meek and lowly in heart.* Throughout the whole course of his life he did evidence a Spirit full of calmness and quietness. If we trace his footsteps from the Cradle to the Cross, we shall not find him either by his Words or Actions discovering the least Expression of Wrath, or Revenge; but the most admirable disposition of gentleness and meekness, even then when his insulting Enemies endeavoured to cast upon him the most ignominious Affronts. We read, *Numb. 12. 3. of Moses his great meekness*; but how was he once and again transported with passion! But never did our meek Jesus, by the most insufferable abuses he received, ever discover a discomposed Spirit. *Isa. 53. 7. He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth: He is brought as a Lamb to the Slaughter, and as a Sheep before her Shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth.* He did indeed frequently meet with extraordinary provocations to anger; but yet how sweet were his reproofs? When the *Samaritans* refused to receive him, *Luke 9. 53.* he did not treat them with contumelious Speeches, nor revenge himself upon them, although he could

could have done it with ease ; but being desired by his exasperated Disciples *to call for Fire from Heaven to consume them*, he rebuked their revengeful motion with, *The Son of Man is not come to destroy mens lives, but to save them.* It would be too prolix a business to instance the several Examples of his Gentleness and Meekness ; only let us view the last Scene of his Life, where we shall behold lively instances to confirm this. When he did find his three Disciples, whom he had commanded to watch, sleeping, he did not upbraid them for their negligence, but gently asks them, *What, could not ye watch with me one hour ?* And when he was treacherously accosted by his own Disciple, who became Leader to a great Multitude who came out with Swords and Staves to apprehend him, with what astonishing mildness did he entertain this Traitor, who had the impudence to betray him with a kiss ? *Friend, wherefore art thou come ?* Mat. 26. 50. or, as another of the Evangelists expresseth it, *Judas, betrayest thou the Son of Man with a Kiss ?* This was all the hard language he treated him with : And after he was apprehended, with what horrid contumelies and affronts did

did his barbarous Enemies entertain him? They did spit in his face, and buffet him; (the highest affronts imaginable) they stripped him of his ordinary Cloaths, and put upon him a Fools Robe and a Crown of Thorns; and being thus disguised, they expose him to the mockery and contempt of the Spectators: Notwithstanding of all which, *he opened not his mouth*; but with a most sedate and serene temper he received all these abuses, as the Apostle Peter expresseth it, *1 Pet. 2. 23. When he was reviled he reviled not again, when he suffered he threatned not, but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously.*

Meekness, I confess, is so noble a Vertue, accompanied with so many admirable and charming Advantages, that it needs (as one would think) but few words to recommend it to men; but no Argument is like to prevail more with generous minds, than the example of so excellent and perfect a pattern. Sure I am, it is the most unaccountable thing imaginable, for the Disciples of so meek a Master to be of a disposition and temper quite opposite to his.

But as his *Meekness*, so is his *Humility* also recommended to our imitation: As
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he was of a meek, so also of a lowly Spirit. His first appearance upon Earth was but mean and despicable ; he was born (as the Scripture informs us) in a low Estate, more fit for the meanest of his Disciples, than for so great a Prince. He was not brought forth in some stately Palace, nor born in a Chamber curiously deckt, but in a vile Stable where the brut Beasts had their residence. Nay, after he had discovered himself by his illustrious works to be a great Prophet, the *true Messiah who enlighteneth every one that cometh into the world*, yet how humbly did he walk ! His Companions he did chuse, were but mean Fishermen ; his Occupation and Employment was no ways honourable ; and his Revenues were but small, as he himself did testifie : *The Foxes have Holes, and the Birds of the Air Nests ; but the Son of Man hath not where he may lay his Head.*

Although his Descent and Extraction was incomparably great, yet he rather endeavoured to conceal than to brag of it ; and so humble was he , that he chose rather to attribute the praise of his admired works to his Father, than take the honour of them to himself, *Joh. 8. 28. I do nothing of my self, but as my Father bath*

hath taught me I speak these things.

He was not ambitious of Rule and Government, but modestly refused to be a Ruler and Judge. Nay, when the multitude thought to make him a King, he shunned their Society by an invisible removal, it being quite contrary to his design in coming into the World, (as he tells us, *Matth. 20. 28.*) *He came not to be Ministred unto, but to Minister.* And to Correct the insolent Pride and Ambition of his followers, how did he stoop to wash his Disciples feet! a most admirable evidence of his lowliness of Spirit.

And now since our great Lord and Master did so wonderfully debase himself to the form of a Servant; since in all his Actions he did manifest that he was meek and lowly, how prodigiously incongruous is it for those who profess themselves to be his Disciples to be proud and lofty?

I confess, Humility is a Grace well becoming our State as Creatures; we are but dependent beings, having life and motion, and all those endowments we are proud of, *from the Father of spirits, from whom every good gift cometh.* The fresh communications of his love we constantly participate of, are freely bestowed; which
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he may therefore, when he thinks fit, with an equal freedom and ease remove, without being guilty of injuring us.

Humility is that peculiar Grace that qualifies and fits us to receive the Divine Aid and Assistance; as the Apostle St. James tells us, *He gives Grace to the Humble.* Upon which account we may with the Wise Man well conclude: *Better is it to be of an humble Spirit with the lowly, than to divide the Spoil with the proud,* Prov. 16. 19.

I doubt not but every considering man will find his own Reason suggest a sufficient store of Arguments to confute the imperious Assaults of Pride and Ambition; But methinks none can more powerfully prevail with ingenuous Spirits, than the Consideration of Christ's Humility: with this how effectually may he repel every Temptation to Pride, by saying; Was my Master lowly of Spirit, and does it become me to be proud?

Thirdly, Christ is also set forth as our Pattern in his sufferings: If when ye do well (saith the Apostle) and suffer for it ye take it patiently, this is acceptable with God; for even hitherto were ye called: For Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an Example, that we should follow his steps,

steps, &c. 1 Pet. 2. 20, 21, &c. Heb. 12. 1, 2.
 His patience under his sufferings was very admirable ; for although he was flouted and contemned by his unworthy Creatures, was exposed to the base Outrages of scandalous Sinners, was made a spectacle, set at nought, spit upon, and smitten by unworthy worms, whom with a word he could have easily dashed into nothing ; In a word, though he endured all that malice could invent, suffered the worst of temporal evils, and became *obedient to the cursed death of the Cross* ; yet notwithstanding, how patiently did he *endure the contradiction of Sinners* ? How entirely did he submit to his Fathers Will ? Although he was extremely sensible of the weight of his sufferings, yet he did not in the least evidence any revengeful mind, in the midst of his extreme tortures, but sweetly recommended his Soul into his Fathers hands. And now can any motive more effectually convince us to suffer patiently ?

But God knows how much we set at nought this president : Fain would we enjoy a continual prosperity, a Life of ease, without the least mixture or allay of trouble. When we meet with any thing that embitters our condition, like the murmuring

ing *Israelites*, we fret and repine, and our Spirits begin to boil with Rage and discontent; we cannot endure to have our pleasures impaired, but *Jonah-like*, we are discontented, and ready to say, *we do well to be angry*: We aggravate the most minute trouble with imagined Circumstances; and are ready to say, *Come, behold and see if there be any affliction like mine*. And although we are assured, that our repinings cannot remove or lighten our burthen, cannot give us the least ease or relief; yet we never rest till those puddled streams be stirred up. Our grumbings are almost inseparable concomitants of our sufferings; and if our Father smite us, we begin to accuse his Love and Tenderness, notwithstanding he hath instructed us that *whom he loveth he chasteneth*.

If we meet with reproaches; our revenge is on the Wing; the least affront kindles this unsanctified Fire: No Arguments can tame our Fury; no President proves effectual to form our Souls to true patience. If we drink of the waters of *Marah*, we complain of their bitterness, and, like foolish Children, think we are hardly dealt with.

And although impatience enflames rather

ther than allays the distemper, though it augments the degrees of our trouble, and disenables us to bear the stroke of Adversity; yet we will not be perswaded to a calm and quiet submission to the Divine Will. Though Impatience exasperates the pain, yet we think we do well to be angry. If we meet with Injuries, our Appetite of Revenge is stirred up; *Flesh* and *Blood* we say cannot *endure* such *affronts*, we imagine it stains our Reputation and Honour in the World, and is degenerate and servile.

Thus do we sew Fig-leaves to cover our nakedness; but the all-seeing God knows that all those repinings are Arrows directed against his Providence; otherwise we should with the Royal Psalmist say, *I will not open my Mouth, for thou didst it.* To this impregnable Fortress he had his recourse, when causelessly cursed and reviled by *Shimei*: It was this that silenced old *Eli*, *It is the Lord, let him do what seemeth him good*: He durst not quarrel at the message, but quietly he submits. There is a secret Providence which doth overrule the most terrible Accidents, and is not accountable to Humane Reason. All those calamities and sufferings we undergo, are ordered by infinite Counsel; and in re-
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pinning at such dispensations, we indirectly blame Almighty Goodness and Wisdom.

Is it fit and congruous that God should take measures from men in his Oeconomy of the world? Is it reasonable that the whole course of things should be put out of order, to satisfy every private mans humor? can there be any greater madness, than to prescribe Rules of Government to infinite Wisdom? Why then are we dissatisfied with our adverse state? why do we repine and complain?

If we did indeed compare our Mercies with our Sufferings, our Receipts with our Merits, or our Condition with that of some others, we could not but be convinced of our folly: But we still pore upon the sore; all our thoughts are taken up and in exercise about our affliction: If we would deal rationally, let us view the sufferings of our blessed Redeemer, and see if we dare make a contrary conclusion to that of the Apostle, 1 Pet. 4. 1. Forasmuch then as Christ hath suffered for us in the flesh; let us arm our selves likewise with the same mind: He suffered patiently and calmly for us; and it is but reasonable that Servants imitate their Master, and suffer the disasters they meet
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with, with the same *mind* that he did, that being thus made conform to our Head, we may be also partakers with him of his joy.

'Tis indeed an unchild-like behaviour, to quarrel at the dispensations of our Heavenly Father : Alas ! all we merit by our sins, is stripes and chastisements ; and *it is of the Lords mercy that we are not consumed* : Sure many who have offended less, have been justly sent to *everlasting burnings* , do now dwell with *devouring Flames* ; and *why should a living man complain* ? It were certainly more rational to be humbled for the evil that occasioned the Rod, that our present misery may not be the prelude to more lasting torments. Nay, there is nothing that more offends God, that is more contrary to the pattern set before us, than to murmur and repine ; let us therefore study to bear the resemblance of our eldest Brother, that our Heavenly Father may acknowledge us for his Children.

In the next place, Christ's *Obedience* to the Will of his Father, is set forth as our President ; and can any thing more powerfully persuade us to *Obedience* than his *Example* ? which not only discovers our duty, but also inspires and enables us to perform

perform it. If the marvellous pattern of Christ's entire Obedience does not form our Wills to do what God enjoyns, I scarce know any Argument that will prove effectual.

And now, how serious was our Lord Christ in dispatching that business his Father intrusted him with ? The work that his Father gave him to do, he finished it : John 17. 4. And he testifieth of himself, That he did always those things that pleased his Father, John 8. 29. And that he might more Emphatically express this, he tells us, John 4. 34. My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work : And indeed, in that he so entirely resigned the whole power of his Will to his Father, Not my will, but thy will be done, we have the most unquestionable proof of his perfect Obedience. He was, as the great Apostle tells us, Obedient to the death of the Cross, submitted to the most dreadful sufferings, that he might instruct us to keep his Commandments, even as he kept his Fathers Commandments, John 15. 10. and that the same mind be in us that was in him.

But God knows how little we regard either his Precepts or Examples : For although our great Master has made his O-

bedience our Rule, yet how ready are we to despise it, if in the least it cross our humours or carnal interest? Alas! little do we consider, that Obedience is essentially necessary in order to our supreme happiness; and that torments, as severe and intollerable as they are lasting, are the lot of the disobedient.

It were to be wished that the Rebellious Posterity of *Adam*, would but seriously ponder what they will be able to say in the great day of Audit. Sure I am, the whole Contexture and Harmony of the Divine Precepts and Doctrines are equitable and just, and therefore call for our hearty compliance with them. The wise God never issued out any Command which could not be obeyed; he is not like the *Ægyptian Taskmasters*, to require *Brick while there is no Straw*. Nay indeed our duty and interest are coupled together so closely, that if we disobey and rebel, we may thank our selves for the misery we have chosen.

And as his Obedience is set before us for imitation, so is his *Love, Charity, and Compassion* also. His whole life was spent in *doing good* to men: How transcendent is his love in pitying us in our degenerate and forlorn Estate? When we were at odds

odds with Heaven, and incapable to help our selves, then, even then, did he commiserate our case, and by his *own Blood* reconciled us to the Father. It is the greatest demonstration of love imaginable, for *a man to lay down his life for his friend*, Joh. 15. 13. And yet more wonderful was the love of our Redeemer in passing through so many cruel sufferings for us, who were but Rebels and Enemies. O how should the remembrance of his boundless Compassions transport and ravish us with love? How strange is it, that the highest endearments of Love have not inflamed our spirits, and made Love mutual and reciprocal?

Love is a most excellent affection, of a noble Original, by which we resemble the best of beings; the great God being by the beloved Disciple described to be *Love*: and indeed well does this description suite with his dealings with men. But alas! how unlike are we to God in this? there is scarce any duty more frequently inculcated by our Saviour than *Love*, John 15. 12. *This is my Commandment, that ye love one another as I have loved you*: And yet how little efficacy has either his Precept or Example with us?

Blessed Redeemer! How unworthily do

impure Earth-worms requite thy Love ? Thou hast not been wanting to conquer our Affections, and to inflame our frozen hearts with love to thee, and to our Neighbour also : Thy Life and Death comprehend the most endearing arguments imaginable ; and yet well mayst thou ask us as once thou didst *Peter*, *Love you me ?* but God knows there are but a very few who can unfeignedly say as this Disciple did, *Lord, thou knowest that I love thee.* We can remember all thy sorrows without tears, and look upon thy Agonies with an unconcerned eye : We can view thee in the *Garden*, when grief and pain made thee sweat *drops of blood*, and behold thee as thou stoodst accused as a Malefactor before *Pilate*, as thou wert contemned, scourged, and derided by impure worms, and most spitefully represented in a fools habit : We can ascend Mount *Calvary*, and contemplate thee as enduring the most shameful *death of the Cross*, and hanging betwixt two Thieves, and all this time have Adamantine hearts, which receive no impression. *Blessed Redeemer !* come touch these hearts of ours, that they may be overcome with Love, that our wills and affections may be perfectly moulded according to thy pleasure.

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Sure if we had any sparks of Generosity or common Ingenuity, we could not thus despise so much love: The very *Publicans* (who were reputed the worst of men) yet *loved those that loved them*: And it hath even in the most degenerate times been reckoned the highest baseness to contemn Benefactors; yet more brutish are we become than these, and may very fitly be ranked in a Category inferiour to that of Brutes: *For the Ass* (as sacred Writ tells us) *knoweth his Masters Crib, and the Ox his owner*, Isa. 1. 3. The very Beasts in their own manner express a kind of love to their Benefactors; and yet although our Redeemer hath made our peace by his blood on the Cross, and hath reversed that sentence of Damnation passed upon us; although he hath endured the greatest dishonour and pain imaginable, that we might be delivered *from the wrath to come*, yet this unparalleled kindness, the greatest endearment of love, hath not had the kindly effect to quicken our dead and benumbed hearts, but like a lifeless carcass we remain insensible without the least return of love.

And indeed it can scarce be well expected that the example of his love to us should engage us to love one another,

since it hath produced so little love in us to himself. But however, I need not take much pains to prove that hereby we demonstrate our selves to be of all men the most ungrate, and justly liable to the severest punishment ever inflicted upon the greatest Criminal.

It would be too prolix to enumerate the several instances wherein Christ is set forth as our Pattern: Sure I am, he hath by his example taught us the exercise of all virtues; and I may say (as himself said in another case) If we know these things, happy are we if we do them.

To sum up this Section, it will not be amiss to obviate an Objection, which is indeed but very trivial, although it be too commonly urged: The Objection is, How is it possible for men to conform to Christ, and be holy as he is holy? Ans. I have already told, that it is not expected that we should imitate our blessed Redeemer in all and every of those Actions he performed: But in all those moral duties which he hath enjoined by his Righteous Precepts, and encouraged us by his Example to perform, these we must by no means neglect; and to manifest the possibility of doing these, we may satisfy our selves by viewing the pious and devout lives of primitive

primitive Christians. It is a great mistake to think we are commanded to a rigorous and strict conversation which cannot be attained; the faithful in former Ages have run the same Race that is set before us; they have fully enough cleared the possibility of our duty: *Wherefore seeing we also* (as the Apostle argues) *are compassed about with so great a Cloud of Witnesses; let us lay aside every weight, and the sin that doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us,* Heb. 12. 1. For shame, let us rather imitate the excellent Holiness of Primitive Christians, than the impure practices of those *who are strangers from the sacred Covenant.*

O the perfect love and imitable kindness of the first professors of the Gospel! What purity, what integrity and innocence appeared in their lives? how ravishing and splendid were their Vertues and Graces; their Patience in suffering, their Courage and Magnanimity in death, their Temperance and Moderation, their Charity and Compassion, their Equality and Justice, and their Contempt of this World and all earthly concerns for the sake and honour of their Master? These were the Vertues they were adorned with, which
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made the Heathen world, who hated the Doctrine they professed, yet esteem and reverence them. *Bonus vir* Cajus Sejus, *nisi Christianus*.

S E C T. 2.

Holiness the condition of future Happiness.

The desire of Happiness is so natural to all that partake of Humane Nature, that it can no more be separate from it than heat can be from fire. 'Tis true, the mistakes concerning happiness are as numerous as dangerous; every one in this corrupt state is apt to frame a happiness which best suits his Inclinations: But yet there is no man so devoid of reason, who doth not desire to be happy; although indeed there be but a few who make use of the right means to attain to true felicity.

Daily experience puts it beyond doubt, that a carnal and fictitious felicity is by the unwise sons of men pursued with the most indefatigable pains and industry possible. Now how strange, to amazement, is it to think, that men should be so sedulous in hunting after a fancied felicity, and yet so negligent, so careless and unconcerned about a real happiness which is both satisfying and lasting!

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But not to digress; that which I am now to urge, is: Since happiness is that which excites men to perform any thing cheerfully in order to the attaining of it, how mightily should the expectation of a future felicity induce them to the practice of Holiness? for betwixt the two our blessed Saviour has made an inseparable connexion, Matth. 5. 8. Blessed are the pure in Spirit, for they shall see God: And indeed it is the height of folly and madness, for impure wretches to expect they shall be partakers of the inheritance of the Saints of light; for as the Apostle tells us, There shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth, Rev. 21. 27. Holiness is the established condition of happiness, Heb. 12. 14. Without holiness no man shall see God. Hence is it that all the promises concerning our future felicity are only made to those men who purifie themselves from all filthiness of the Flesh and Spirit; and the great design of them is to encourage us to Holiness; upon which account St. Paul draws a very pressing inference, 2 Cor. 7. 1. Having therefore these promises, (of which he spake in the foregoing Chapter) let us cleanse our selves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.

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There is nothing more certain, than that only holy Souls are in a capacity of participating of that future felicity ; and these may without the least charge of presumption claim an interest in it : But for those vicious wretches, who are wholly polluted, who have devoted themselves to commit sin with greediness, and take pleasure in doing evil ; how utterly incapable are they (if they continue such) to dwell in his presence, *who is not a God that taketh pleasure in wickedness?*

And now seeing there is such an inseparable connexion between Happiness and Holiness, it cannot be amiss if we take a short view of the excellency of this celestial felicity, that it may more plainly appear what a notable encouragement and motive it is to Holiness.

There be two things that forcibly recommend the excellency of that future state of bliss. *First*, A perfect freedom and immunity from all evils. And *Secondly*, a perpetual enjoyment of the chief good.

First, It is a blessedness wholly exempt from evils whether of sense or loss ; 'tis a happiness attended with no inconveniences, nor dismal circumstances, as the happiest state here is : We now walk in the
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midst of perplexing doubts and fears ; temptations increase our inquietudes, and dangers our continual fears : Our complaints are by far more numerous than our joys ; nay, what is our whole life, but a scene where sorrow and fears act their parts ! *Man that is born of a woman is of few days and full of evil.*

But our future blessedness quite excludes all those evils ; there is nothing admitted to imbitter that pleasant state, *Rev. 21. 4. And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes, and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain ; for the former things are passed away.* The holy Soul shall then no more complain of any dolorous hours ; the heavenly *Jerusalem* is a place unacquainted with every thing that is uneasie and troublesome.

And yet this is but the least part of the Saints Felicity : For as they shall enjoy a perfect freedom from evil, so shall they also be advanced to the fullest fruition of that God, where all the streams of goodness do finally empty themselves : Blessed are the pure in spirit, for they shall see God, Matth. 5. 8. They shall see him, not as now through a Glass darkly, but then face to face, 1 Cor. 13. 12. They shall, as the

the *Angels in heaven*, always behold the face of their Father, Matth. 18. 10. In whose presence (as the Psalmist assures us) is fulness of joy, and at whose right hand are pleasures for evermore, Psal. 16. 11. Oh the unspeakable delectability of the Saints future state ! where the most blessed God shines forth in his Glory ; where the beams of beauty ravish the beholders, who stand continually in his presence receiving the manifestations of his Glory !

Sure if the faint expectation of enjoying the company of vertuous men in their fancied *Elyzium*, did instigate some Heathens to imitate their vertues ; how much more perswasive should the heavenly *Jerusalem*, and the City of the living God be ? where the holy Soul shall be admitted to converse with an innumerable company of holy Angels, and taken into the blessed Society and Church of the first-born ; where all those imperfections that imbitter our Communion here, are removed ; where the holy Soul shall see *Jesus* the blessed *Mediator of the New Covenant*, Heb. 12. who suffered so much for sinners, now sitting in Glory and Majesty ; not Crowned (as once he was) with *thorns*, nor wearing a *Purple Robe* ; but having on his

his head the most transplendent Diadem, and cloathed with Majesty and Beauty. Methinks the thoughts of beholding this glory, and participating of so much felicity, should excite the most lazy to follow Holiness, and to walk worthy of him who hath called us to his Kingdom and Glory.

But I confess I am not able to express half of the glory of that future felicity: The blessed Apostle seems to intimate, that all Hyperbolical Expressions fall short in describing it, 2 Cor. 4. 17. where he styles it, *A far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory*: and 1 Cor. 2. 9. he tells us, *Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man to conceive, what God hath prepared for those that love him.* For although we may be assured that the reward is of infinite value, and that *the Righteous shall shine forth as the Sun in the Kingdom of their Father*: yet the most glorious part is hid from the eyes of Viators; 'tis only those who taste the Honey-Comb that can best discover its sweetness.

And yet it is prodigiously strange that the imperfect glance of future Glory that men may here behold, is so ineffectual to form them to Holiness; that men who
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know they may be for ever happy, if they would study and endeavour to be holy in all manner of conversation, yet live as if they thought such a happy state not worthy to be noticed.

I confess, If the faithful and true God had not promised this state of blessedness, and discovered by revelation the truth and reality of it, we could never have dreamed of partaking of so much happiness. The Heathen World could never be ascertained (by Nature's dim light) that the Soul is beyond all doubt immortal, and that there is a future state of rewards and punishments. The wisest of their Philosophers, by their most laborious search, were exceedingly confused in their thoughts about it, and could at the most only entertain some probable guesses and conjectures, founded upon moral Arguments, which could never perfectly conquer their doubts: They did indeed think it was very reasonable to believe that God (who is holy, just, and good) would in another life (since he did not in this) reward good men, and punish the bad; but they could not be, beyond all doubt, ascertained that it would be so. The most celebrated *Socrates*, who parted with this life in expectation of a better, plainly told his

his Friends, it was God only who knew whether there were a future felicity or not; much less could either he or any other, without revelation, discover the nature and quality of the blessedness of that future state. And indeed, although they entertained some imperfect notions of a future life of bliss for the Soul, yet they never thought of the Resurrection of the Body: Although 'tis true, the felicity they formed, was more congruous by far to satisfy sensual Appetites than rational Souls; the Poets *Elyzium* being much of the same nature with the *Mahometan Paradise*, exactly accommodated to their flesh and Senses.

In these thick clouds of darkness and ignorance, did the wisest of the Heathens walk: Exceedingly perplexed they were what to think, their doubts being greater than their hopes. But the arising of the *Sunshine of Righteousness* hath wholly dispelled all that darkness; the Gospel hath brought life and immortality to light, 2 Tim. i. 10. And hath undoubtedly assured us that there is a reward for the Righteous, and that Holiness shall be Crowned with Happiness.

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SECT. 3.

Holiness the only safe way to escape the wrath to come.

Fear is a Passion so extremely violent, and repugnant to Humane Nature, that nothing imaginable is of more force to conquer the unruly wills of men to duty. Hence is it, that even Humane Laws are much more secured by punishments than rewards : Therefore if the promise of Heaven be not forcible enough to work upon our rebellious Wills, we have a Map of Eternal and Intollerable Torments to excite our Fear, and to affright us from the Commission of those Sins *that lead down to the Chambers of death* ; and that drawn so exactly, that it is the greatest miracle, that men will notwithstanding slight *Holiness*, which is the only means to evite these lasting tortures.

In sacred Writ, the torments of the damned are represented by such terrifying expressions, that it is a wonder they impress not a fear and terrour upon the most daring sinner. The Apostle *St. Jude* describing Hell, calls it, *The vengeance of eternal fire*, and *the blackness of darkness for ever*, Jude 7, 13. And the Apostle *St. John*

St. John calls it, *A Lake of Fire and Brimstone*, Rev. 20. 10, 15. Our Saviour more emphatically describes it to be *A fire that can never be quenched, and where the worm dieth not*, Mark 9. 46. All which phrases do most significantly express the severity and intollerableness of the torments: For what punishment is so terrible as that of *Fire*? and how unspeakably does it enhance the misery, in that it is *eternal*? and that too, as inflicted by an offended God, who is executing his vengeance upon sinners.

Would God sinners would seriously consider whether they are able to endure the eternal pains of a gnawing Conscience? or can patiently dwell with devouring Flames? Whether the momentary pleasures of sin, are to be ballanced with those furious reflections, those horrid stings and intollerable tortures the damned suffer day and night, where nothing of life remains but the sense of pain? Alas! will no Argument prevail with men? how amazing is it to think that the everlasting God has used all the methods of love to excite men to Holiness, and to reclaim them from sin, and all to no purpose? May I not well say to such men, as St. Paul said to the Galatians, Unwise sinners, who hath bewitched you?

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Did men seriously believe the threatenings of the Gospel, I am sure they would not, for the fullest enjoyment of carnal felicity, run the hazard of *dwelling with everlasting burnings*. That man that soberly considers, *that the wrath of God is revealed from Heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men*, will, I think, easily be scared into reformation, and be thereby excited to be diligent in the pursuit of substantial Holiness, which is the safe course to escape that wrath.

Alas ! That men who are so wise and diligent in their secular concerns, should prove so foolish, so remiss and careless in matters of the greatest weight, and which require the utmost diligence ! That rational Creatures should so willingly purchase their own misery, and be at so much pains to damn themselves ! 'Twill surely be an aggravating Circumstance of their misery, to think that they might have been happy, if they had but taken as much pains to live holily, as they took in the pursuit of sinful pleasures. How astonishing a consideration will it be to the damned, to think of their *treading under foot the Son of God, and their counting the blood of the Covenant whereby they were sanctified, an unholy thing ?* Heb. 10. 29.

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to think, that the time was when they enjoyed not only a possibility, but a fair probability also of escaping the fury and indignation of God!

But men will not believe that a merciful God will thus torment his Creatures; that he who delights not in the death of sinners, will execute his vengeance upon them. Alas! what delusory imaginations are these? For although *Fury is not in God*, yet his Honour calls for the Execution of Justice upon ungodly Sinners, *who obey not the Gospel of our Lord Jesus*. He has waited long upon sinners, and has fully testified that he is a God long suffering, and slow to wrath: He has not instantly resented every injury offered to him; but day from day has been intreating sinners to turn from the evil of their ways: And now seeing *they set at nought all his Counsel*; and will not hearken to *his Reproof*, what wonder is it though he *laugh at their Calamity*, and *mock when their fear cometh*? Prov. i. 25, 26. How heavy is that threatning, Deut. 28. 63. *As the Lord rejoiced over you to do you good, so the Lord will rejoyce over you to destroy you?*

To complete the misery of the damned, besides the intollerable and eternal pains they

they endure, we may also add that celestial felicity they are for ever excluded from. How tormenting will it be to think of an everlasting separation from the divine presence, and instead of a holy Society, to keep a continual correspondence with impure Spirits?

Would God that this brief discovery of the powers of the world to come, might prevail with men to be holy in all manner of conversation.

But methinks I hear the over-zealous Professor too ignorantly objecting, that it is servile, mercenary, and legal, to be holy for love of Heaven, or fear of Hell. Truly if it were so as these men teach, I know not what can be the intent and design of all the promises and threatnings of the Gospel. & And although I question not but it is a Generous and Christian principle, to serve God out of pure love; yet I can never be induced to think, that to be holy for love of Heaven and fear of Hell, can be separate from that principle of love to God.

God knows how much in need men stand, both of Arguments to work upon their *Hope* and *Fear*, to excite them to *duty*. And since he who knows our Natures, has used promises to allure us, and threat-

threatnings to awaken us, we must not pretend to be wiser than God, and reject those motives he has thought fit to prescribe: And indeed, if it were not for the fear of evil, and the hope of good, 'tis to be feared, the pressing of other motives should be but a mere beating of the Air.

But that this is not servile and mercenary, needs no other Argument to prove it, but our Saviour's enduring the Cross, and despising the Shame, *for the joy that was set before him*; a Scripture sufficient enough to stop the mouths of all opponents.

S E C T. 4.

Holiness the main design of the Gospel, and the end of all Christs sufferings.

Subjects who know the intent and design of those Laws issued forth by their Prince, will be loath to condemn his Authority, especially when the whole intent of these is to make them by their obedience the more happy; and sure 'tis the most unaccountable thing that can be, if they notwithstanding despise his Laws, and quite counter-act his design.

Now the main design of the Christian precepts,

Precepts, is the promoting of Holiness, and planting a good life in men: This also was the only intent of our Sovereign and Law-giver; and it is certain the whole advantage redounds to us. How impious then is it to despise the Authority of Heaven? If God had made Holiness a matter of indifferency, the want of such a qualification had not been criminal: But since sacred Writ has declared, *That this is the Will of God, even our sanctification*, and that *we must be holy as he is holy*; if we rebel, the indignity and contempt we cast upon him, is insufferable.

I have already shewed, that it is the great design of the Gospel-Precepts, Promises, and Threatnings, to exalt Holiness. Hence the Apostle very aptly calls it, A doctrine according to Godliness: And he tells us, that the design of it is, to teach men to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts, and to live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present World: And the Character of its Nature is, to turn men from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and an inheritance among them that are sanctified by Faith in Christ.

I wish the effect were answerable to the design. I doubt not but the Gospel has had

had a kindly influence upon some, to form them to Holiness, I would fain wish upon all: But alas! the perverse and corrupt conversations of men plainly tell us, that there are but a few who have answered its design.

In the next place, it were easie to demonstrate, that to plant Holiness amongst men, was the end of Christs descending from Heaven to Earth, and of all that he suffered. This the Apostle plainly enough holds forth, *Tit. 2. 14. He gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purifie unto himself a peculiar people zealous of good works.* Now what Argument should be so powerful and prevalent to engage Christians to be universally holy, as the due consideration of Christ's redeeming them for that end?

Men who are indu'd with any sparks of ingenuity, cannot but be inspirited to be separate from the pollutions of this world, when they reflect what their Redeemer hath suffered in order to the purchasing of their Pardon and Reconciliation: For when poor Man had cast himself headlong from Heaven to Earth, had lost his pristine purity, and subjugated himself to the cruel Tyranny and dominion of Sin; in this deplorable state being utterly unable to help

help himself, our blessed Lord redeemed us from our captivity, by offering up himself a ransom to satisfy Divine Justice; and all this, that we might walk in newness of life. And now what ingratitude is it to despise so much love? Sure, *If he that despised Moses's Law died without mercy, of how much sorer punishment shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the Blood of the Covenant wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing?* Heb. 10. 28, 29.

He must certainly be of a very base and disingenuous spirit, who takes pleasure in sin, when he considers how dearly Christ paid for it. Hath he been at so much pains, undergone such dismal sufferings to purchase our peace, and will we notwithstanding frustrate his design? how strange to astonishment is this, that men should prefer captivity to freedom?

Alas! Is it not enough that our blessed Master was so barbarously and spitefully used by the Jews and Roman Soldiers, but must we be also Actors in the Tragedy, and by our sins crucify him again?

Did he not die that we might live? and shall we spend our life in offering despite

despite unto him? Strange, that so much madness should lodge in the breasts of any into whom God hath breathed the breath of life!

I might here also add, that it is a contemning and offering of the greatest despite to the *Holy Spirit*, to despise Holiness; for upon this account is the Third Person of the Blessed Trinity called *The Holy Ghost*, because his peculiar Office is to enable us to perform holy Actions: Now if we continue in our Rebellion, if we reject the offers of Grace, and the internal motions of the Spirit to Holiness, we do hereby become guilty of quenching the Spirit of God, and offering despite unto him; which is so horrid a piece of villainy, that Heaven threatens it with the severest torments.

S E C T. 5.

Holiness the most proper and effectual means for attaining length of days.

Of all outward and temporal blessings, *length of days* hath justly the precedency, since without this all others can afford little or no comfort: The possession and enjoyment of other mercies, can bestow no satisfaction to men lying on their beds
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of languishing : Nay, there is no comfort, be it never so great, but men would willingly quit with, to acquire this. Now since this is above all things so universally desired, it cannot but very much enhance the value of Holiness, to demonstrate that there is nothing so proper, nor more effectual to procure length of days than this.

In order to my proving of this, I shall first make it plain from Scripture, that length of days is due to holy men by virtue of the many true and faithful promises ; and secondly, I shall appeal to common experience to determine the case.

First, There is nothing more evidently asserted in Scripture, than that Holiness hath the promise of length of days annexed to it, Prov. 3. 1, 2. My Son, forget not my Law, but let thine heart keep my Commandments ; for length of days and long life shall they add unto thee. This encouraging Motive is pressed very effectually by Moses, in his exhortation to Obedience, Deut. 4. 40. Thou shalt keep therefore his Statutes and his Commandments, which I command thee this day, that it may go well with thee, and with thy children after thee, and that thou mayst prolong

prolong thy days upon the earth. Upon this account we also find that there are many promises of this nature to obedient Children, *Exod. 20. 12. Honour thy Father and thy Mother, that thy days may be long upon the Land which the Lord thy God giveth thee.*

And as Righteousness tendeth to life, (as the Wise Man observes) *so he that pursueth evil, pursueth it to his own death,* *Prov. 11. 19.* There is nothing more evident from Scripture, than that sin hath a natural tendency to shorten mens lives; nay, the great God, who is serious in his threatnings, hath assured us it is so: Upon which account we may well conclude with the Wise Man, *Prov. 10. 27. The years of the wicked shall be shortned.*

The whole tenour of the Scripture abounds with many such promises and threatnings; and the thing is so plain, that I need not stand to transcribe many Texts.

But besides Scripture, this Truth is also plainly attested by common Experience: For if we examine who are the men who for ordinary, are most obnoxious to Diseases, and live shortest; we shall find it true enough, that the vicious are the men, who live not out half their days,
Prov.

Prov. 23. 29, 30. *Who hath wo? who hath sorrow? who hath wounds without cause? They that tarry long at the Wine, &c.* Holiness is repugnant and inconsistent with excess, which naturally puts a period to the lives of men, It forbids all manner of vice, which *leads down to the Chambers of death*; and keeps men within due bounds in their eating and drinking.

Before mankind had corrupted themselves by their notorious and impudent viciousness, we read of their great length of days; but the increase of sin multiplied diseases, which hurry men to untimely deaths.

I deny not but the great Lord and Master of the Universe may, for holy and wise ends known unto himself, cut short the lives of the Righteous; yet surely if we consult either Experience or Reason, we shall find it certain beyond doubt, that virtuous men enjoy, for ordinary, far the longest lives.

Some good men may be naturally of a brittle constitution, yet how strangely has their life been protracted by their moderation and sobriety? and how many strong men have had their days shortened by their intemperance and excess?

Indeed

Indeed, He that considers this well, shall find, that Holiness is the most effectual means to promote long life, both upon a moral and natural account. Upon a *moral* account, long life is the reward which the divine Promises do secure to such men ; and on the contrary, wickedness is threatned with shortness of days. Upon a *natural* account, the Fire doth not more naturally produce heat, than Holiness does procure health and length of days ; and there is nothing more evident, than that the most of Vices have a Physical efficacy in the shortning of humane life. That this is the necessary product and genuine effect of intemperance and lasciviousness, needs no other Argument to prove it, but the daily examples of Multitudes, whom those sins have hurried to their Graves. And truly there is not any Vice which does not, like fire in mens bosoms, torture and consume them ; and so disorders and discomposes them, that they even neglect the necessary means of their health. See *Period of Humane Life*, pag. 111, 124, Edit. 2.

SECT.

S E C T. 6.

Holiness that which makes men honourable ; Vice rendring men mean and ignoble.

Honour is an Ornament so noble and venerable, that he is but very sottish, if not quite brutish, who doth not court and care for it. Upon this account it is nothing strange, that ancient Philosophers, who wanted the assistance of Revelation, placed mans happiness in it.

How many brave and gallant Actions have been performed, which if they had wanted the bait of Honour had never been attempted ! Gallant Souls, who despise all other rewards, have been hereby excited to undergo the greatest dangers.

Now, since honour is so highly esteemed, especially by those who pretend to generosity ; I shall, to encourage such to befriend Holiness, endeavour to prove, that the most effectual means to procure Honour, and to be in esteem both with God and Man, is *to live* (as the Apostle adviseth Men) *Soberly, Righteously, and Godly.*

Only before I proceed to prove this, I shall premise one Caution, namely, that
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by *Honour* I do not chiefly understand one dignified with any extrinsecal honour arising either from his Birth or Office; though both these are to be highly esteemed, and must not be denied that external respect due unto them: But by *Honour* I understand that esteem and reputation that the best and wisest men do give to any whose Moral Honour is conspicuous; and under this notion the Stoick-Moralist hath very well expressed it,

Nobilitas sola est atque unica virtus,

Which upon the matter disagrees not much from that sacred position of the Wise Man, *Prov. 22. 1. A good Name is rather to be chosen than great riches.*

Having premised this, I come now to prove that Holiness is the path-way to Honour. And indeed, this is so plainly asserted in Scripture, that it needless to insist. The God of Heaven hath assured us, that those that *Honour him, he will honour*; and those that *despise him shall be lightly esteemed*, 1 Sam. 2. 30. Much like to this, is that inducement to Holiness urged by our Lord Christ, *John 12. 26. If any man serve me, him will my Father honour.* Now men cannot honour God

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more, than by being holy: For the word is comprehensive, and includes all those duties that God hath enjoyned; but every Vice is a despising of his sacred Authority. If then holy men are those only whom God will honour, and vitious men those whom he will contemn, we may easily conclude, who are the honourable, and who are the base and ignoble. Sure those men must be honourable, whom the Fountain of Honour esteems such.

'Tis upon this account that the Saints are called (in Scripture) *the excellent of the Earth, and the worthies of the World*, (how meanly soever men esteem them) *of whom the World is not worthy*: And the Righteous is said to be *more excellent than his Neighbour*. And indeed, Holiness doth not only promote the honour and esteem of private persons, but of publick Communities and Kingdoms also, *Prov. 14. 34. Righteousness exalteth a Nation, but sin is a reproach to any people.*

This is a Truth which the wisest of the Heathens, who yet wanted Revelation, constantly taught, namely, That *Honour is the reward of Vertue*. Hence the large Lectures they have written in the commendation thereof; it would be too tedious

tedious to transcribe even the Elogies that they have written in the praise of Vertue ; and indeed it is well worthy of our observation , that as they have illustrated Vertue by their large Encomiums of it, so Vertue (which they Courted) hath made them venerable to Posterity, and transmitted to us their memories under the most amiable Encomiums imaginable : And however their Birth was but mean and almost regardless, yet their virtues have made them more famous than Princes and Emperours. The virtues of *Aristides* , *Socrates* , *Seneca* , *Marcus Regulus* , and many others, have made their renown glorious ; whileas many Emperours and great men have had their names buried in silence.

Let a man be as rich as ever any of *Adam's* Posterity was , or (that I may extend it farther) as high as his ambitious thoughts can wish ; let him be wise as *Solomon* , and endued with all other perfections and advantages ; yet if he want Vertue , how insipid will his Name be to Posterity ? It is Virtue alone that conduceth to fame. 'Tis true, some wicked men (called in Scripture vile , notwithstanding their Authority) have been set in high places , and honoured for fear ,

when alive ; yet they never received that honour which hath in all Ages accompanied the Righteous. They have had the external, (which is indeed due to men by vertue of their Descent or Office) but wanted that internal Reverence and Honour which is only due to good men : And I doubt not to say, that there is nothing more incongruous and unsuitable, than to see Honour given to such men. *As Snow in Summer, and as Rain in Harvest ; so Honour is not seemly for a Fool,* Prov. 26. 1.

Vice is in the Judgment of all considering men so mean and base, that it casts a stain and reproach upon men ; makes their Names unsavory, and stink in the Nostrils of after-Ages : But Holiness forces a veneration from men, and makes Posterity raise Elogies in their memory ; *but the memory of the Wicked shall be forgotten.*

Vertue was that alone whereby many Kingdoms and Empires have been raised ; was that which made them so flourishing and potent, and prevailed more to their Establishment and Advancement, than Strength or Policy. Thus it was with the old *Romans*, (for their vertues are a shame to the present State of that Empire)

pire) their Clemency and Justice conquered Kingdoms , and made *Rome* renowned and glorious beyond all other Kingdoms and Common-wealths : And as Vertue hath raised *Kingdoms*, so hath it also particular *Persons* ; whileas Vice hath cast Emperours from their Thrones, and made them as unfortunate as they were wicked.

Many of the primitive Martyrs, who were renowned by Kingdoms and Common-wealths (who keep Festivals in honour of their memories) were but of an inferiour degree, and had nothing to recommend them to Posterity but their Holiness and Sanctity ; and indeed, any man that consults Reason , will easily find himself constrained to reverence and esteem virtuous men.

'Tis a wonder that any man who pretends to Generosity should be vitious , there being nothing so mean and base as Vice, which like to Cowards always lurketh , and dares not approach the light. I doubt not but this present Age hath arrived at as high a Confidence in proclaiming their Sins as *Sodom*, as ever any former Age acquired ; and it may (to the reproach of it) be said , as ever any is like to reach to ; yet till men cast quite

off humanity, it cannot be expected that Vice shall have Advocates to plead in its defence. 'Tis a noble saying of the great Moralist *Seneca*; *Licet Deus nesciret nec homo puniret peccatum, non tamen peccarem ob peccati vilitatem.*

'Tis no wonder then though Vice appear (as the Devil in *Samuel's* Mantle) under the Cloak of Vertue; though Lust mask it self with the pretence of Love, and cruelty of Zeal: But by this means it proclaims its timorousness, not daring to own publicly what it really is.

It were a large field, to descend to the consideration of every particular virtue and vice, and to shew that there is not any virtue but tends to the advancement of a mans honour and fame, and no vice which is not ungentile, mean, and base: But the brevity I have designed will not allow me to enlarge; only in brief I shall demonstrate the truth of this by some few Instances.

Justice is so gallant a virtue, that it advanced the Renown of those whom it adorned, beyond what riches or preferment could ever bestow. The *Romans* were more famous, and (where they were Enemies) more formidable for their Justice than their Power: It was this Vertue which

which in a peculiar manner made Scepters and Kingdoms submit to their Government. But *Injustice* is so base and contemptible a Vice, that it hath made those who are captivated by it, despised as the unworthiest of men, not deserving to be taken into friendship, but to be excluded from humane Societies. How unfavorable hath the Name of unjust Judges been to Posterity, while every one is ready to strew some Elogies in honour of the just!

To this I may annex *Constancy in Friendship*, as a Vertue as noble, as amiable: For who will not Admire and Celebrate the man who remains fixt to his Friend, whatever Alterations or Changes there may be in his Condition? And sure whosoever fails in his friendship, lays himself open to the most merciless Condition, and needs expect to be left to befriend himself when the Wheel of Providence lays him below those he thought unworthy of his favour.

Of all Vertues, Liberality, Charity, and Compassion are so noble, that common speech adapts this Elogy to them by way of Emphasis; and indeed, I think I need not say much to raise an estimate of these: For no man can be so base as to despise

those who bestow favours upon him. Sure there is no vertue that makes men more famous, that wins the hearts and affections of people more than Liberality : But *Avarice* is ungentile and sordid, and so odious a vice, that it ever lessens all other vertues, and makes those it possesses the most hateful of men.

Charity is an obliging vertue ; and as it hath its original from, so doth it also necessarily produce Love and Esteem to : He who prefers the necessities of others before his own superfluities, and who does supply the wants of others, does so cheer the languishing hearts of the needy, that nothing can be more generous, nor generally meets with a greater recompence of honour and esteem.

To compassionate the case of the Fatherless, of the Poor and Needy, is so noble a vertue, that the Apostle makes this qualification alone the evidence of *pure and undefiled Religion*. It is a most unnatural and more than brutish sin, to slight and forget such.

Meekness and *Humility* are such noble imbellishments of humane nature, as I have formerly shewed, that none but proud and insolent spirits, who have been always condemned as insufferable, durst ever disesteem them.

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To these I may joyn *Affability* or *Courtesie*, as a Vertue near allied to Humility and Meekness; which being noble in its causes and effects, cannot but denominate the Person it illustrates both noble, and amiable, and lovely: 'Tis indeed an evidence of a very base and abject spirit, to be sullen and morose. Persons of a noble Education and Original, are frequently known by their condescending and obliging behaviour; and I am sure Reputation and Esteem are the apparent effects of Courtesie.

Temperance and *Moderation* are Vertues more noble, than that they need eloquence to advance their value, as its contraries are too mean and beastly to be inveighed against. How brutish and contemptible is a drunken man, who is rather an object of pity, (as mad-men are) than reproach; who being a more apt resemblance of a Beast than a Man, deserves as little Honour, as he is ignorant what Honour means?

S E C T.

S E C T. 7.

Holiness attended with the most solid and real pleasures.

In all things that concern practice, there is scarce any motive more forcible than Pleasure; and of all Pleasures, those that entertain the Soul are the most excellent. We indeed need no Argument but experience, to demonstrate how ravishing sensual pleasures and delights are, how much they are caressed and courted, till men be glutted and filled with them. But alas! How inconsiderable are all sensitive delights? The enjoyment of these cannot raise us above *the Beasts that perish*; but those pleasures which are fitted for the rational nature, are noble and lasting; and such are all those delights that arise from a holy conversation; no joy, without this, being able to make a mans life pleasant and delightful.

There is in Holiness an internal delectability, that is better felt, than it can be expressed; but how loathsome and odious is Vice? It is compared in Scripture to the most ugly and unpleasant things: But Holiness is so comely, so delightful, and ravishing, that it is very fitly (ac-
cording

according to the Scripture-Epithet of it) called, *The Beauty of Holiness*. It is this alone that produces a calm and serene Conscience ; from which necessarily results acquiescence and delight : And indeed, this is no fantastick and imaginary joy, (as the Atheists of this Age would make men believe) but a true and real one, affording much more complacency and satisfaction, than all the pleasures of sense. To the truth of which, I doubt not but those men who question it should assent, if they would but make the experiment ; and till they do this, they give us too evident an instance of their folly, in denying the reality of those raptures of joy resulting from a holy Conversation.

But besides Experience, this truth is likewise confirmed by Reason : For who is in more probable circumstances to participate of pleasures, than he who is Master of his Passions, who hath subdued his Appetites, and freed himself from those imperious Lords, who denied him the liberty of tasting and relishing pleasures ? The pious Soul may have no large allowance of temporal mercies ; yet having Contentment, he is richer than the wicked man whose Coffers are full.

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But we need not doubt of the reality of those pleasures ; the Wise Man hath long since put this out of question, *Prov. 3. 17. Her ways are ways of pleasantness.* There is here a concurrence of all those circumstances that contribute to make any thing delectable ; 'tis a way pleasant for its plainness, and desirable for its end : There is not indeed any thing wanting in it, that usually draws out mens delight.

All beauty falls inconceivably short of this ; it being Holiness alone, that makes the Righteous *shine forth as the Sun in the Kingdom of their Father* : Without this, all natural comeliness is imperfect, and as the Wise Man expresses it, *is deceitful and vain, Prov. 31. 30.*

And yet what an universal Empress is external Beauty become ? Nothing being of equal force to attract the eye of beholders as it doth. How hath she conquered the mighty, and made the Nobles of the Earth Vassals to lacquey after her ? There is an almost irresistible power and force in her charmings, which conquereth the hearts of men insensibly.

Now if Beauty mixed with so much deformity, accompanied with so much attendance and slavery, be so enchanting and

and attractive ; how much more powerfully should the Beauty of Holiness, which is every whit perfect and unspotted, and attended with no dismal accidents, raise our admiration, and make us say (as *David of Goliath's Sword*) *There is none like it ?*

Alas ! All earthly beauty will be quickly laid in the dust ! a little time will deface the fairest face, and make its beauty consume like a Moth : An unexpected Accident may disfigure it, and marr the most lovely features ; and there is no doubt but old Age which draws on apace, will make wrinkles in the smoothest face, and make it wither as a flower : But the Beauty of Holiness is lasting ; it fades not with time, nor can it be impaired by the most loathsome and nauseating disease.

Since then Pleasure is so ready to excite our affections, and draw out our complacency, 'tis pity that the noblest, the most satisfying, and the most lasting should be so much contemned. *Eccl. 5. 10. He that loveth Silver, shall not be satisfied with Silver ; nor he that loveth abundance, with increase.* All the Caresses of this World are unable to satisfy the Soul ; but how ravishing are the joys of a holy conversation ! The pleasures of this world
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are short and momentary, are only (as the Apostle phraseth them) for a *season*, which quickly passeth; but the joy of the Holy Ghost is as lasting, as unspeakable; and *this joy* (saith Christ to his Disciples) *no man shall take from you*. It is without the reach of the malice of Men and Devils too.

Alas! How diminutive does it make the pleasures of the wicked, to say they are short? how exceedingly does this one circumstance diminish them? But indeed this were not so very considerable, if there were a concurrence of no worse Circumstances; but that which mostly is an alay and damp to Temporal Pleasures, is the consequence, a painful and lasting Eternity of the severest punishments. 'Tis this life that puts a period and conclusion to the joys of wicked men; whileas the Pious have Rivers of Pleasures for evermore to delight and ravish them: 'Tis at Death that they *enter into the joy of their Lord*.

This is a Subject so ravishing and pleasant, that I cannot without reluctancy conclude it. O how unsatisfactory are all the delights of Sense, if compared with those Spiritual Joys the holy Soul partakes of! The delights that the Drunkard hath
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in his Cups and Companions, the Covetous in his Riches, the Ambitious in his Preferments, &c. fall all incomparable short of that joy that is the lot of the righteous.

The delights that the holy man enjoys do upon a double account far over-poise the Transitory Pleasures of the Wicked.

First, the present satisfaction that the holy Soul tastes of in this Valley of Tears, is incomparably greater than the delights that arise from Sense: The Soul that hath once tasted of the Love of God, finds more pleasure in the very acts of mutual love, than in all the feasts of delight that sense is capable to enjoy. Food is indeed sweet to the hungry, and drink to those who are languishing with thirst: The tast does without doubt find some meats sweet and relishing, even where there is no extremity of hunger, much more where it is: For, *to the hungry every bitter thing is sweet.* Beauteous Sights ravish the Eye, melodious Musick the Ear, and Odoriferous things please the Smell: But alas! how far beyond these is the delight which the devout Soul receives in Ordinances! the antipasts of joy which their Heavenly Father bestows upon them, are more delightful than the concurrence of all

all sensual pleasures. The Soul that is in trouble can fetch more consolation from the promises of the Word, than the carnal man can from his pleasures: *Unless thy Law had been my delight* (saith the Psalmist) *I had perished in my affliction.* Other things could not avail him, they could afford no relief: But to have access to God in prayer, and to pour out our complaints to our willing God, this is more ravishing than I can express. And I am sure there is no man who hath tasted these joyns, who would part with them for sensual pleasures; and no man dare inveigh against those spiritual delights, but *Strangers who intermeddle not with this joy.*

The very Heathens have taught us, that Vertue is a reward to it self; they experimented more real satisfaction in moderation and temperance, than in Drinking and Whoring. But Christianity gives us more uncontrollable evidences of the reality of that joy that good men even in this state of absence tast of. Into what a Rapture and unexpressible Extasie of Joy did the abundance of Revelation St. Paul met with, put him! And the Apostle St. Peter was so transported with joy when he did see Christ in his Transfiguration,

ration, that he could not forbear crying, *Master, it is good being here.* How full of joy have Martyrs been in the midst of the flames? What comforts have they even then expressed? And is not all this evidence, that the joy of holy men is more real, more sweet and ravishing, than the Transitory Pleasures of the Wicked, which in several seasons can afford no delight? A little pain or disease is such an allay and damp to their pleasures, that it quite extirps them.

But besides those foretastes of joy that the holy Soul experiments here, which, as I have shewed, infinitely overwhelms all trouble and pain; that which contributes most to advance the joy of good men, are those felicities above, which are prepared for them; and to these wicked men can lay no claim, their farthest prospect being confined to temporal delights.

What abundance of delights and unexpressible pleasures are laid up for the holy Soul above! How delectable will it be, to be constant Residents in the Heavenly *Jerusalem*, whose Streets are pure Gold, and whose Gates are Pearl? How Ravishing will it be, to be always in his presence, where there are Streams and
I Rivers

Rivers of perpetual pleasures? How sweet will it be, to be a member of that blessed Society of the first-born in Heaven, where there is a perfect concord and agreement? But I confess, I am not able to express half the joy of this future felicity: *Eye hath not seen, nor Ear heard, neither hath it entred into the Hearts of men to conceive*, what a store of happiness God hath laid up in Heaven for those who are *holy in all manner of Conversation*.

S E C T. 8.

Holiness accompanied with Peace.

There is nothing more suitable to, and agreeable with humane nature than Peace; as those who endure trouble and vexation can fully attest: Amongst earthly blessings it deserves not the last place, it being a mercy which Crowns all others, and without which, the fullest fruition could not prove satisfactory.

Those languishing, and much to be pitied, Kingdoms, which now lie bathed in blood, can attest the evils and mischiefs of War, much more pathetically than words can express. How sweet and acceptable would Peace (a word always sounding sweetly) be to them?

Now

Now the Apostle St. James hath given us a brief, but unquestionably true, account of the real causes of Wars and Fightings, *Jam. 4. 1.* *From whence come wars and fightings among you? come they not hence, even of your lusts that war in your members?* From these sinful causes have all the disorders and jars in Kingdoms and private Societies had their real (I speak not of their pretended) Original. How impetuous are the lusts of turbulent spirits! like the raging waves of the Sea, they are still in motion, casting forth filth and dirt. *Ambition* is so unquiet and restless a passion, that no man is ignorant what desolations it hath wrought in the earth: How many famous Kingdoms hath it ruined and destroyed? What Inquietudes and Disorders are occasioned by *Discontentment*? All these are things so evident, that I need not enlarge upon them: But how repugnant are these Vices to Holiness? and can it be rationally imagined that their genuine and proper effects can be more reconcilable with it?

I confess, Religion hath too frequently been pretended as a Cloak to cover the greatest Villanies, Confusions, and Rebelions: But sure I am, nothing imaginable

contains a greater contradiction, than to say these impieties have a warrant from the sacred Laws of the Gospel, the combination of which is the Rule of Holiness, as I have formerly explained. Is not Christ called *the Prince of Peace*, and the Gospel, *the Gospel of Peace*? And it is certain, if men would be ruled by the Laws of so peaceable a Prince, they should be of a calm and quiet spirit: Then should we indeed see *Righteousness and Peace kissing each other*.

When ever therefore we read in ancient Prophecies of the great peace that shall be in the *Messiah's* Reign, we must thereby understand, that the nature of the Gospel and its Precepts are such, that if men would conform their lives to them, there should be an universal Peace. How strictly are all the causes of Envy, Contention, Ambition, and Rebellion, prohibited? And sure if these causes were removed, their effect should have no place: Then should the *Bow* be broken, and the *Spear* cut in sunder: *Swords* should be turned into *Ploughshares*, and the Instruments of War into more necessary uses: *War* should cease unto the ends of the *Earth*, and *Peace* should be within each *Wall*.

By

By this it is apparent how much holiness conduceth to the establishment of publick peace. But that which I would more especially take notice of, is, the internal serenity and calmness of Conscience, which is the only effect of Holiness: And truly upon this account *there is no Peace to the wicked.*

I might here appeal to every mans breast, whether Holiness does not calm and quiet the Consciences of men; while-as a natural horror results from the Commission of Vice, more heavy than the severest lashes ever inflicted by *Cedius* or *Rhadamanthus*. What unspeakable peace and ease does attend Holiness of life! There is no Jar nor Contention, no check of Conscience, nor wound of Spirit, to disturb the inward repose of the Righteous: But that remorse that results from the Commission of Sin, even after men have acquired what they sinfully lusted after, is like that Hand-Writing, *Dan. 5. 5.* which made the stout heart of *Belshazzar* to tremble, and his Knees to smite one against another: It troubles the thoughts of the most daring sinner, and makes him a terror to himself. There is no imaginable torment that can equal the terrors of an awakened guilty Con-

science ; it hath put men to chuse strangling and death rather than life ; all which is fully verified by the word of Truth : *The Spirit of a man can sustain his infirmity ; but a wounded Spirit who can bear ?*

O the secret pangs and fears that possess the spirits of wicked men ! The severe checks and lashes of Conscience that seize upon Transgressors, which all imaginable divertisements cannot quite stifle and suppress ! All the attendance of the most dear Relations cannot give ease and comfort to them. How dismal and inconsolable was *Spira's* condition ? how amazing are the very thoughts of those gnawings and horrors of Conscience he suffered ? The fears and apprehensions of a future misery, marr all the joy and mirth of carnal men. In their most flourishing state it continually haunts them, and so fills them with horror and inquietude, that they cannot quietly enjoy themselves. Whilst the Soul acts within the Body, it cannot but present those horrid and disquieting reflections.

Hi sunt qui trepidant & ad omnia fulgura pallent.

These are the men who in the midst of
outward

outward felicity are amazed with tormenting fears, which cannot be eradicated but by a sincere repentance.

But the holy Soul, in the extremity of outward troubles, enjoys an internal calmness and quiet of mind: The very Pagan, who could not be beyond doubt assured of the certainty of a future reward, could yet say,

— *Hic murus aeneus esto,
Nil conscire sibi, nulla pallescere culpa.*

But the word of truth hath made this more unquestionably sure: *Psal. 119. 165. Great peace have they that love thy Law, and nothing shall offend them.*

S E C T. 9.

*Holiness the best evidence of true Wisdom,
and real Worth, and Courage.*

Wisdom and *Courage* having their rise and source from nobler Principles than external helps, have therefore in all Ages been esteemed excellent and venerable virtues; and much preferable to those others which depend upon external advantages. *Wisdom* is (as the Wise Man speaks) the principal thing, *Prov. 4. 7.*

It is that Vertue which in a peculiar manner raiseth the Humane Nature above that of Bruits, who act without consideration and Counfel. And *Courage* is that which subdueth that ignoble passion of fear, which hindreth men from attempting Actions praise-worthy. Hence it is, that to be called a Fool, or Coward, are such reproachful denominations, that nothing imaginable is more shameful.

That Holiness is an infallible Evidence of true Wisdom, is more plain than it can be doubted. In Sacred Writ, *Wisdom* and *Religion* are used as convertible terms, as words expressing the same thing. *And unto Man he said, Behold, the fear of the Lord, that is Wisdom, and to depart from evil, that is understanding, Job 28.* Hence the impious and wicked are frequently called *Fools*, and men void of Understanding and Wisdom. And however this prophane Age of ours hath accounted those men great *Wits*, who have cast off all Religion, and who Burlesque Scripture; who think it the greatest folly to be kept in awe by the fears of future danger, and to be kept in thralldom by the Apprehension of an invisible Being: Yet men who consider things aright, have

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in all Ages accounted those Atheists both fools and mad-men.

Fools, in condemning that which all wise men have assented too. But 'tis no wonder, since sin is that which overclouds and stupifies the Judgment, and deprives them of those intellectual abilities whereby men acquire a right judgment of things. Alas! why should such be accounted wise, who cast themselves in the dirt and puddle, who contaminate and pollute their Souls, who prefer a temporal to an eternal felicity, who blindly and inconsiderately expose themselves to the wrath of a God revenging sin? Sure the greatest Idiots are not comparably so unwise as these men, who venture their Souls upon such hazards.

There is nothing that doth so much debase humane nature as sin: The Psalmist, who but upon a surprisal vented his impatience and envy, yet characterizeth himself a fool for doing so, *Psal. 73. 22. So foolish was I, and ignorant: I was as a Beast before thee.* 'Tis Religion alone that is the most certain and uncontrovertable difference betwixt men and bruits. The very Pagan Satyrift could say,

— *Sepa-*

— *Separat hæc nos*
A grege brutorum —

Reason will easily convince every man that will but take pains to consider, that those men who neglect their greatest interest, can never shun to be esteemed fools. Now to be serious and careful about the Soul, to be ascertained how it shall go with us in the other world, this is the greatest concern of man, about which the greatest care and diligence possible is little enough: And sure those men who design happiness (a thing implanted in the Natures of Men) must either make use of the right means in order to their acquiring of it, otherwise they too plainly proclaim their folly: But the holy Soul makes Religion its whole business; he knows that it is his greatest interest to be holy, and that without this he can never expect to be happy hereafter. And indeed, whatever may be this present apprehensions and thoughts of men, yet they shall ere long pass the verdict of circumspect walkers, That they were the only wise men: And the God of Wisdom, who can give the best judgment in the case, does account the Saints to be wise men.

men. Let us then hearken to the Apostles advice, *Eph. 5. 15. See that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools but as wise.*

But as Holiness doth thus entitle men to wisdom, so doth it also promote true valour; it mightily conduceth to inspirit men with courage and magnanimity: The righteous are bold like a Lyon; but the wicked flee when no man pursueth. And the reason of both is plain; the one hath secured his future state; but the other expects no better inheritance. And however wicked men may be very daring, yet they cannot be said to be truly valiant; for this is always rational and deliberate: But if wicked men should soberly consider the unspeakable hazard they run upon, they durst not be so daring; for what considering man would thus expose himself to danger to be esteemed gallant, who knows if he miscarry he is everlastingly miserable? If this merits the Encomium of Courage, why may not those mad-men who inconsiderately expose themselves to danger, be also accounted valiant? Nay, the Horse that undauntedly, but inconsiderately, runs so many dangers, encounters so many perils in battel, may be as truly said to be valiant, as those men: But this is to mistake quite the true notion of courage.

That

That man that is affrighted with a small danger because it is present, but nothing amazed with a future danger which is certain and intollerable, is certainly both Fool and Coward. A *Fool*, in judging so badly, and mistaking his own interest and well-being: A *Coward*, in being afraid for a danger because it is present. He who runs from his Colours in time of Battel, proclaims himself to be a Coward, although thereby he exposeth himself to a greater danger if he be apprehended, even the severe Sentence of the Martial Law justly inflicted upon Fugitives. How then can those men be accounted valiant, who for fear of some small danger they may run the hazard of here for Holiness, expose themselves to those vials of Fury which is the portion of ungodly men hereafter?

S E C T. 10.

Holiness universally profitable, and above all things most advantageous.

In all secular affairs that concern practice, Gain and Advantage is the great argument and attracting inducement that prevails upon men; it is like Oyl to the Wheel, making its motion more easie and swift.

swift. There is no danger so terrifying, but men have hazarded on, who have had this motive to animate them: This is it that prompts the Mariner to expose himself to the dangers of the merciless Ocean, that excites Servants to toil so industriously, and encourageth Soldiers to fight Battels.

That men may also be inspirited and allured to court Holiness upon the account of its Utility and Profit, I shall (abstracting from those advantages I have already instanced) now briefly discover, that Holiness is, *First*, Profitable to men in every condition and state. *Secondly*, that it is attended with all outward blessings, and wants not a claim to a temporal felicity. *Thirdly*, That without it all other mercies are useless, and unable to quiet the Soul. *Fourthly*, That it is the most incomparable blessing, and frees the Soul from the worst of Evils. *Fifthly*, That it is the best Evidence of our being in favour with God, and of our Adoption to Gods Family. And *Lastly*, That it is the best Cordial against the fears of death, and affords the greatest satisfaction to men lying on their Beds of languishing.

That Holiness is profitable and advantageous

That Holiness is profitable and advantageous to men in every condition and state, seems to be clearly enough asserted by the Apostle, when he says, *Godliness is profitable for all things.* But besides Scripture, Experience, and Reason, do joyntly agree in the proof of this. That man that is advanced above others in riches, has no ground to expect honour and reverence from men, if he walk not according to the rule of Holiness; that is, if he be not moderate and compassionate, if he restrains not his Ambition and Pride: And sure, without this love and Reverence from others, his Condition is not very happy, he lies exposed to infinite dangers.

Again, If a man be exposed to a mean and adverse estate, is environed with an infinite number of perplexing difficulties; yet this case is not altogether hopeless; for if he be not vitious, but on the contrary, Religious, besides the divine aid that is engaged for his relief, the circumstances he is stated in are apt motives to stir up bowels of Compassion towards such a person.

Unless the Magistrate, who is invested with Supreme Power and Authority, imitate God in goodness as well as in greatness,

ness, his Authority will produce fear rather than love. The very Moralist could say, *Sine bonitate nulla majestas*. Those who will be at the pains to consult Experience, shall find that good Princes have always been in the greatest esteem; and sure it is the most unpardonable villainy to attempt any Evil against Religious Kings.

Holiness is also profitable for Subjects to teach them obedience, and to submit, not merely upon the account of wrath, but for Conscience sake; which is certainly the only safe expedient to secure the Obedience of Subjects: And, I confess, I know not how that man can be a true Subject to his Earthly Prince, who stands not to offend the God of Heaven. I know some who have pretended to much Holiness, have been the greatest Villains; but this proves not that the Rule of Holiness gives a superseas or allowance to any to disobey Authority.

Art thou a Parent? the Rule of Holiness (to which holy men conform) will instruct thee to be gentle and tender to thy Children, and not to *provok^e them to wrath*, which is the only thing that lessens their affection. *Art thou a Child?* it will teach thee to Reverence and Honour

nour thy Parents; in doing of which, thou entitlest thy self to the promise annexed to the Fifth Commandment. In a word, it is profitable to make all manner of Relations live in quietness and peace, and to bestow mutual Offices of Love upon each other. It instructs men to be faithful in every Calling and Employment: And certainly the good Man is to be trusted far rather than the wicked; for Religion lays an Awe and Restraint upon the one, but the other pretends no such motive to engage him to fidelity, especially if he may deceive and not be noticed. To this purpose *Plutarch* hath a notable saying: *Pietate* (saith he; *Nat. Deor. lib. 1.*) *sublata, fides etiam & Societas humani generis, & una excellentissima virtus justitia tollitur.*

There are several things useful for some men, but altogether unprofitable for others, but Holiness is equally profitable for all; there are none exempt from tasting its utility, but those who exclude themselves by a vicious conversation.

Secondly, Holiness is attended with all outward blessings, and wants not a claim to a temporal felicity, *Matth. 6. 33.* *Seek ye first the Kingdom of God and his Righteousness, and all other things shall be added.*

ded unto you. The promise of Inheriting the Earth (by which all temporal felicity is meant) is made to the meek: *Matth. 5. 8. Blessed are the meek; for they shall inherit the earth.* And indeed, we find this blessing even promised to the posterity of those that fear the Lord, *Psal. 25. 13.* And to put this beyond all doubt, we find this Psalmist repeating this five times in one Psalm, *Psal. 37. 9, 11, 22, 29, 34.* And the great Apostle tells us, that it is *Godliness* that hath the promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come, *1 Tim. 4. 8.* The God of Heaven hath also assured us, that he will withhold no good thing from them that walk uprightly. Upon this account well might Wisdom say, *Prov. 8. 18. Riches and honour are with me* : a plain instance of which, we have in *Solomon*, who because of his asking Wisdom to govern his Subjects, when he might as freely have ask'd Riches and honour, he receives this answer from God, *I have also given thee both riches and honour, King. 3. 13.*

But however this discriminating providence doth not so discernedly appear here, yet there is no man but can attest Vice hath impoverished thousands? there being several sins that have a natural tendency

dency to poverty. *By means of a who-
rish woman, a man is brought to a piece
of bread, Prov. 6. 26.* The like we may
truely enough say of several other sins.
*I have seen (saith the Psalmist) the wic-
ked great in power, and spreading himself
like a green bay-tree; yet he passed away,
and so, he was not: yea I sought him, but
he could not be found, Psal. 37. 35. 36.*
I confess, good men may be reduced to
great wants, may be destitute of necessary
provisions; nay, how frequently is this
the lot of the most excellent and gallant
Souls? yet this may be safely said, *That a
little that a righteous man hath, is better
than the riches of many wicked.*

*But then those things that best deserve
the name of riches, because of their en-
riching the Soul, which being more ex-
cellent than the Body, must upon that ac-
count be of greater value than these things
that onely respect the Body, these are
onely peculiar to holy men: and such
are the graces of the Holy Spirit, the
combination of Christian vertues, the
price of which is above that of Rubies.
These are riches which are of a more la-
sting nature than those which the Igno-
ble of the world call riches; they are
not subject to the casualties which Gold
and*

and Silver and precious Stones are ; which upon that account cannot be called a mans own, as Pagan Moralists have largely and excellently confirmed : And if we will not dispute with God, and contest his determination, we shall finde one single vertue receiving a more ample commendation than ever riches did ; 1 Pet.

3. 4. *The ornament of a meek and quiet spirit is in the sight of God of great price.*

Although the holy and devout Soul may be reduced to our Saviours straits, *not to have where to lay his head* ; yet how can he be said to be poor, since he possesses him who is All ? The most adverse chances that befall such a Soul, cannot denominate it poor ; there is a Crown and Princely Inheritance which belongs to it. Nay, besides that glorious reversion, we have expresse promises that such Souls shall not be altogether destitute of necessities to sustain and support them in this their pilgrimage.

I have already shewed, that Honour and Pleasures are the attendants of Holiness : What in the world is more glorious, than for a man to conquer those lusts and inordinate appetites that seek the mastery over him ? what pleasure is able to con-

test with those ravishing joys which result from a holy conversation? There is nothing imaginable that so exhilarates and revives men, as a calm and quiet Conscience. But I pass this.

In the next place I come to shew, that the enjoyment of all other blessings can never profit that man that wants Holiness. This is plainly attested by our Saviour, saying, *What hath a man profited if he should gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?* To have an affluence of temporal mercies, cannot so much as contribute to a present felicity, where the forementioned qualification is lacking. Outward favours, not attended and chained with real Holiness, contribute onely to enhance the misery of their possessor; they being proper fuel to increase the flame of inquietude and restlessness, but unfit to allay it. The greatest plenty of riches cannot satisfy the covetous minde, which like the Grave cries, *Give, give.* The whole world could not satisfy Alexander's insatiable ambition; but, as the Poet speaks,

Æstuat infelix angusto limite mundi.

'Tis indeed impossible for a man to enjoy

joy that earthly felicity he designs, if he want Holiness : For, suppose he be possessed of it, yet the secret acknowledgement of a superiour power, impairs the delights that do arise from such a state, and makes him in the height of his fancied felicity startle and quake. Conscience, upon the apprehension of guilt, and the vengeance due to it, recoils upon the sinner, and disturbs his quiet enjoyment of the pleasures he might otherwise freely enough delight in. O how does it molest and torment him,

Nocte dieque suum gestare in pectore testem.

to have an inward principle of Fear haunting the sinner in his most retired enjoyment of pleasures, which cannot be silenced by his utmost endeavours ! This, this is it that torments him with anguish and confusion, that allays the imaginary pleasure of the most charming Lust, and *in the midst of laughter makes his heart heavy* : which fully verifies the truth of what I said ; that the enjoyment of all other blessings can never free a man from torment, nor a whit profit him that is destitute of Holiness.

Fourthly, Holiness is the most incomparable

parable blessing, and frees the Soul from the worst of evils. What *David* said of *Goliath's* Sword, I may more safely say of Holiness, *There is none like it* ; nothing in the world so apt to remove those disasters and turmoiling fears that inwardly work upon and damp the mindes of men with severe checks and lashes, as Holiness, which being diametrically opposite to sin, which is the worst of evils, must therefore by a necessary consequence be the best of blessings.

Now seeing contraries placed near to other are the more discernable, I shall therefore take a short view of the evil and malignity of sin, that hereby the beauty and excellency of Holiness may appear the brighter, and have the greater force to conquer our affections.

To express the evil and malignity of sin, Scripture represents it by the most ugly and abominable things, by the most dangerous and terrible Diseases : Nay, the great Apostle seems to want language and comparisons too, to express the evil of it, when he calls it *exceedingly evil*, as if he had said, it infinitely transcends all other evils ; the malignity of which, no Pen can fully delineate and describe, either in its nature or consequences.

In its Nature; the Scripture-character of it is, it is *an enmity against God*; a *transgression* and voluntary violation of his most holy and righteous Law; a disobedience of his Authority, and a wicked contempt of all the divine Attributes: 'tis the woful stain and blemish of our Natures, the disease of our Souls, and the reproach of our Reason.

The consequences of sin are fearful and fatal. So bad a cause can never fail to produce the worst effect; for besides all the temporal calamities and mischiefs that befall Mankind, those unspeakable miseries and extream torments that accompany men to the other world, are also the dreadful and sad effects of sin. I have already shewed, that every vice is naturally attended with some particular punishment: but that indeed which is most terrible, which should mightily amaze and startle the sinner, are the dreadful miseries of another world: Alas! how dismal is the condition of those men who have lost the divine Image, and consequently his love and favour, and are liable to his fury and wrath? who are possess't with a *legion* of impure lusts, which lead them captive, and hurry them headlong to perdition, where they must

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have

have their everlasting abode with impure spirits and devouring flames.

How impossible is it to give a just List and Catalogue of the sad and dreadful consequences of sin, or fully describe the evil and malignity of it! But yet this imperfect glance may in part satisfy and inform us, that a holy and vertuous life, which excludes all those mischeifs and inconveniencies which both in this and the next life attend sin, is the best of blessings, and frees us from the worst of evils.

Fifthly, Holiness is the best evidence of our being in *favour* with God, and of our *adoption* to Gods Family. How sedulous and inquisitive are many good Christians to understand their spiritual state and condition, that they may know into which of the two regions of the other world they shall be staid after death? This is certainly a matter of the greatest consequence, and deserves every mans most serious consideration; a mistake here being so exceedingly dangerous, like a wound in the vital parts, it proves mortal and incurable if continued in. Now the most infallible mark and character of our being in favour with God, and that which comprehends all others, is that
which

which the beloved Apostle sets down,
1 Joh. 3. 7, 8, 9, 10. Little children, let no man deceive you : he that doth righteousness is righteous. (And every one that doth righteousness is born of God, Chap. 2. 29.) He that committeth sin is of the Devil — Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin — In this the children of God are manifest, and the children of the Devil : Whosoever doth not righteousness, is not of God. Let men pretend what they will, if they be destitute of righteousness, they are of their Father the Devil, and can claim no interest in God as their Father ; seeing it is purity of Spirit that gives us a title to be the Children of the most high ; 2 Cor. 6. 17, 18. Be ye separte, and touch not the unclean thing, and I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty. The whole tenour of the Scripture abounds with so many such instances, that I shall supersede a tedious citation of texts.

This then being so infallible and certain a character, methinks every rational man may quickly come to the knowledge of his spiritual estate. A bad man may certainly enough know whether he breaks the divine Laws, and goes in a continued
course

course of sin; and a good man may sufficiently know whether he obeys the divine Laws, and is sincere in his actions. These are things so plain and undeniable, that all doubts of this kinde are ridiculous. Now 'tis no difficulty to draw these plain inferences: *I break the divine Laws, therefore I am not of God*: or, *I obey them, therefore I am a Child of God*. And this every considering man, who impartially considers, and exactly examines his life and actions, may be fully enough ascertained whether he be a Child of God or not. Alas! how useles and dangerous is it to ascend unto Heaven to search the secret and eternal Decrees of God, which belong not to us to pry into, that we may know whether our Names be written in the Book of Life or not? He that doth righteousness needs not fear any latent Decree concerning his reprobation; and it is the vaineft thing imaginable, for impenitent and obstinate sinners to dream that God hath from eternity elected them to life. The pure nature of God is so perfectly opposite to sin, that it is quite impossible there can be any agreement betwixt him and sinners, no more than there can be betwixt light and darkness. The Psalmist acquaints us, *That he is not*

a God that hath pleasure in wickedness. And the Apostle hath told us, *That the wrath of God is revealed from Heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men.* But yet the righteous Lord loveth the righteous : These are the men whom he esteems his Children, to whom the promises of eternal life belong.

In the last place, there is nothing in the world that will prove so effectual to comfort men at the hour of death, as the sweet thoughts of their being separated from the pollutions of the world. How unspeakably comfortable is it for men, when they are just stepping into the other world, to reflect upon the good life they have led, and that they carry in their bosomes Consciences void of offence both toward God and towards man ! This is indeed that noble and Sovereign Cordial that revives the spirits of good men, *in their passage through the valley and shadow of death*, and makes their comforts abound and overflow.

Death is not so small a matter as some men think ; in Scripture it is not unfitly called *the King of terrors* ; Now nothing can free men from the terrour of it, but a good Conscience ; and this cannot
be

be had without Holiness, which makes all calm and serene within. It will afford men little pleasure when they come to die, to reflect upon the earthly pleasures they have enjoyed: these things profit not *in the day of wrath*; but the Conscience of well doing make mens salute death without dread and astonishment and lift up their heads with joy, because *the day of their redemption approacheth.*

But with the ungodly and wicked it is not so; then their sins stare them in their face, and so terrifie and affright them, that no wonder though in the extremity of their agony they prefer strangling and death to life. If holy *Job* doth so heavily complain of the terrours of God, how much more terrifying shall the apprehensions of a severe and terrible judgment be to the unsanctified and polluted? To think how shortly he must be everlastingly separate from the good things he enjoyed here, and be cast into utter darkness, to have his portion with the damned in devouring Flames, to be an everlasting resident in the Lake of fire and brimstone, where he shall be continually tormented with that gnawing worm that never dies: These are the amazing thoughts
that

that will seize upon the sinner: his Conscience then will not sleep; nothing will be able to allay those Storms and Tempests that are raised by the fearful expectation of the reward due to sin. At death, men are generally wiser than at other times; then they begin to consider what they have been doing, and call themselves fool a thousand times for their disobedience and wickedness. The smog of worldly cares that formerly blinded their eyes, [is now dispelled; they see their folly, when it is too late to mend it; and if they do no more, yet *Balaam-like*, they will cry, *O that I might die the death of the righteous!*

CHAP.

CHAP. IV.

Frivolous Cavils and Objections removed.

THe former Chapters having discovered the *Beauty of Holiness*, and the mighty power and force of Arguments that excite to the practice of it; one who weighs all this by the measures of equity, cannot (as any man would think) but look upon it as the strangest prodigie, that so just a Cause should miss of its effect, and find the sons of men, who pretend to be such Masters of Reason, so monstrously foolish in rejecting it upon the account of some frivolous and very fallacious cavils: But the truth is, resolute Impiety is set upon the bench and made Judge; and no wonder though it pass an unjust sentence, and condemn Holiness because of its opposition to Vice.

The common imputations and prejudices which wicked men load Holiness with, I shall reduce to the four following Heads. First, Holiness lays upon men heavy burdens, and grievous to be born, which makes humane life joyless and uneasie, they being so inconsistent, first, with
Peace 3

Peace ; and secondly, with Pleasure and Satisfaction.

Secondly, Experience informs us, that wicked men enjoy pleasure and satisfaction in their ways, there being no men so jovial and merry as they ; and that men who pretend to Holiness are fullen and melancholy, and are exposed to heavy sufferings and trials.

Thirdly, 'Tis singularity and ambition that prevail more with men than any other motive to be holy.

Fourthly, 'Tis the greatest piece of folly, ignorance, and impudence, for men to quit with present pleasures for mere uncertainties.

The first being the most material Objection, I shall therefore more largely and distinctly examine it ; and in doing of this, I shall desire these four things may be considered. *First*, that the divine laws are not grievous and uneasy, *Secondly*, that Vice is much more troublesome and difficult than Vertue. *Thirdly*, that Holiness conduceth both to the Peace and Happiness of humane Societies, and to the temporal Advantage of private persons. And *Fourthly*, that there is a great deal of more pleasure in the ways of Holiness, than in the commission of sin.

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That the divine Laws are not grievous and uneasie, but extreemly reasonable and wise, is a truth I have already made plain, when I discoursed of *the rule of Holiness*. The whole tenour of the Laws of Christianity being so exceedingly fuitable to the very nature of men, it cannot be rationally supposed that they can be grievous to them. St. Paul to the *Philippians*, gives us a brief and compendious, but very full and comprehensive, account of what things the Laws of our Christianity enjoyn, *viz. Whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, and whatsoever things are of good report* : all which are so agreeable to Reason, that even the light of Nature prompts men to the doing of them, and fully discovers it self to be an irreconcilable Enemy to all kinde of vices.

'Tis not then Reason, but the impetuous Lusts of men, that determines a holy Law to be grievous and uneasie : and indeed, no wonder though this unjust Judge make Holiness appear formidable, and represent it as grievous to Mankind ; it being so much the interest of this partial Judge to condemn it as criminal,
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and to discredit it as a yoke intolerable and grievous to be born. 'Tis not probable that the most innocent shall pass uncondemned, when an Enemy is set up in the Judgement-seat to pass Sentence: our blessed *Saviour* must be pronounced guilty by *Pilat*, although even this unjust Judge openly profess, *he found no fault in him*. And seeing our great Law-giver met with so severe a sentence, who can expect any more upright verdicts should pass upon his Laws?

But that the divine Laws are not indeed grievous to be born, may easily appear from plain Texts of Scripture (which is the only infallible rule.) Our great Lord hath himself taught his Disciples, *That his yoke is easie, and his burden light*. And one of his inspired Disciples has assured us, *that his commands are not grievous*: two Texts sufficient methinks to remove all those prejudices that are cast upon a holy life, as if it were full of fatigue and trouble.

But besides Scripture, Reason and Experience too, come in to witness this truth. *First*, Reason bears witness that the divine Commands are extreamly reasonable and natural; and is it not against the common vote of Mankind, to say, What

is natural, is uneasie and difficult? Men who impose hard and grievous tasks upon others, are by all men condemned as unreasonable; which certainly implies, that whatever is reasonable, is not grievous and difficult. 'Tis true, sinners, who by their many repeated acts of disobedience have contracted a habit of sin, do indeed commit it with less trouble than those who first engage to this Tyranny; as Slaves, who by custom look upon that as easie, which at their first entrance upon such a slavery was very difficult and grievous: And yet whatever ease the most daring sinner may pretend is to be found in the acts of sin, I durst appeal to his own breast, whether he might not with a great deal of more ease, and less fatigue, have kept the divine Laws, than he met with in breaking of them.

I confess, the Laws of Christianity are not natural in a strict and confined sence; but onely in so far as they correspond with, and are suitable to, the nature of Mankind: hence some sins are said to be *unnatural*; not because all sins may not adopt to themselves that title, but because upon a more peculiar and special account, all men are sensible that they are brutish, and unbecoming any who carry

carry in their bosom a rational Soul. There is not any vice, but it infects and prejudices Nature. *Anger* is a degree of Madness, that violently transports men; and quite mars their inward ease and repose. *Revenge*, a more lasting and deliberate fury, preys upon the Soul where it resides, and so distracts and hurries it with inquietude and restlessness, that nothing imaginable can be supposed a greater Enemy to Nature, how sweet soever and luscious it may seem to depraved nature. *Intemperance*, and *Unclean-ness*, are sins which debase Humane nature below that of beasts, and are the cause of many intolerable pains and Diseases, which make Humane life but an uneasie burden. But besides all these troubles, we may adde that horreur of Conscience that haunts the sinner with fear and astonishment. All which contribute to clear the truth of what I assert.

Again, Reason tells a man, that it cannot be grievous to him to perform that which is so much his interest and advantage. Men in their secular concerns find no difficulties in any undertaking wherein their interest is concerned; and sure it is mans greatest interest to keep the divine Precepts, as I have already at

some length discovered. 'Tis an excellent saying, of as excellent an Author: Reason (says he) *must first cease to be Reason, and commence Phrenzie, before 'tis possible it can set it self in defiance of those Laws of Christ, which are accommodated to its greatest interest.* Causes of the decay of Christian Piety, Chap. 3. But besides Reason, Experience bears also witness to this truth, that the divine Laws are not grievous. But before I proceed to prove this, I shall premise two Cautions: *First*, when I say that Experience makes it plain, that the Laws of Christianity are not grievous; I do not mean that a sinner when he first forsaketh his sins, and betakes himself to a holy and vertuous life, shall encounter with no difficulties; no sure, this cannot reasonably be expected: for his former habit in sin will at the first give him work enough; he has an old custom to oppose and struggle with, which will cost him no small pains to overcome. *Secondly*, far less must we fondly imagine that the Law of Christianity is so easie, as supercedes and gives a discharge to humane industry, vigilancy, and care: they are but strangers to a holy life, and never knew what it is to obey Gods Com-

Commandments, who never were at any pains, nay who are not very industrious and careful to observe them. When our Saviour says, *his yoke is easie*, he does not hereby intend to persuade men to be like *Solomons* fluggard; sure Heaven was never designed for loiterers in Gods Vineyard: but his intent there, is to remove a common prejudice men were like to entertain against Christianity, as if it were an intolerable yoke, and insupportable task: now this Christ forewarns his Disciples is not true.

These two things being premised, I now appeal to Experience (which often corrects error in speculation) whether the Laws of Heaven or Hell are most grievous. And to condescend as far as possible, I shall not here call in the Experiences of good men, who all unanimously assent that there is more ease and less fatigue in obeying, than in breaking the divine Laws; but I shall submit to the sinners own testimony, when he is in his most sober state; I mean, when he is under the extremity of some pain inflicted by his sins, or when he lies upon his death-bed: at other times, when he is in the pursuit of some Lust, no wonder though he pass as unjust a sentence as sick

men do of tastes, who having their palates infected with some venomous and filthy humor, judge every thing, be it really never so pleasant, to be bitter and harsh.

Go then to sinners when they come to themselves (as it is said of the Prodigal, *He came to himself*, as if he had been before mad or distracted) and ask them whether they find more trouble in their doing or omitting of sin ? Ask the Drunkard, who by his intemperance lies smarting under the tormenting pains of the Gout, whether he had been wiser, and suffered less trouble, if he had been temperate, and abstained from excess ? Nay, besides the diseases that many, if not most of vices bring upon men ; there are some sins that make men sensibly in the time find pain and trouble. Go to the Lascivious and Wanton person who is tormented with the Pox, and ask whether his sin be grievous to him or not ? There are few sins which are not attended with grievous concomitants. But I shall not insist.

I Confess, no mens Experiences are so likely to demonstrate this truth, nor are more pertinently appealed to, as theirs who have once experimented the pleasures

fures and pains of both states : Ask therefore those who were once Drunkards and Adulterers, but are now sanctified and settled in a course of Holiness ; and I am sure they shall verily testifie, that it is onely Satan's Yoak that is uneasie and burthensome.

But granting that there is some difficulty in the exact observation of the Laws of Christianity, (as sure any man who consults the corruption of his own nature, and the depraved inclinations thereof, against which they are levelled, will never deny) yet if this shall be judged a good Argument to cancel the Laws of Christianity, all Laws whatsoever shall be quire dashed out, and banished the world ; for who shall be guilty, if he may have the liberty to use this for a relevant excuse ?

This being then so unreasonable to imagine, (and if it should be admitted, should yet never a whit excuse the sinner, who to his experience findes sin to be so uneasie and troublesome) yet I shall adde two Considerations that demonstrate, the Laws of Christianity are more easie than any other Laws that ever were invented ; and that they are not (as carnal men represent them) *hard sayings*

which none can bear. First, the Author of the Gospel-precepts hath afforded to us an assistance, able to conquer all the difficulties that can be supposed to attend the keeping of his Mandates. 'Tis true, if Christ had enjoined his followers to obey a Law which could not possibly be kept; I confess, in that case, his Commands had been grievous, and his Yoke insupportable: Or if he had been satisfied with no less than perfect innocence, and unfinning obedience, I don't see how this prejudice and cavil could have been removed. But he who prescribed those Precepts, considered the frailties of our nature, and the weakness of man in this lapsed estate; and therefore he has provided help for us, if we will but be at the pains seriously to implore it; *For he giveth his Spirit to them that ask it.* And upon this account the beloved Apostle encourageth Christians to obey the precepts of the Gospel, because, *Greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world.*

Secondly, The excellency of the Reward that is promised to the obedient, is a most noble consideration to make men (as the Psalmist speaks) *run the way of Gods Commandments.* The promissory
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part of the Gospel, renders the preceptive part easie. Methinks the holy Soul should with comfort thus express it self, when the greatest difficulties offer: Good God! shall I be discouraged to obey the hardest (if any thing proceeding from infinite Wisdom and Goodness can be said to be difficult) of thy Commandments, when so glorious a prize is the reward thereof? If a terrene and temporal felicity animates others to encounter the most Giant-difficulties, how much more unconcernedly should I flight all hazards, and contemn by a fearless courage all dangers, for that *blessed hope that is set before me?* Can I remember there is a Kingdom promised, and yet be terrified from it by supposed difficulties, or complain that the way is inaccessible? Do I really know that it is indeed a good Land, and am yet discouraged to attempt the taking of it, because it will require some violence? Shall I, like the *Rubenites* and *Gadites*, set up my rest on this side of *Jordan*, notwithstanding this proposal of *Canaan*? No sure, eternal Life is too noble a prize to be lost, for fear of fighting the Good fight. I regard no difficulties while I eye the Crown; I cannot think these Precepts grievous, that
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are enforced by so many excellent promises. So great a recompence of reward should, methinks, inspire the dullest Heart, and sweeten the hardest Service; should make any one willing and content to sacrifice his most beloved lusts, to cut off the right Hand, and pluck out the right eye, which stand in the way, and hinder him from entring into Heaven.

Having thus endeavoured to explain upon what account the Laws of Christianity are not grievous, I hope I shall not need to insist long upon the following particulars. At first sight it seems plain, that since the case is so, Vice must certainly be more troublesome than Virtue; and that it is easier for men to live holily, than wickedly: and yet, I know not by what strange artifice, Holiness has had the bad luck to be represented as being extreamly difficult. I confess, I intend not to inveigh against the sacred Tribe of *Levi*, who have represented Heaven almost as unaccessible, as the *Israelitish Spies* did the good Land of *Canaan*; knowing they thereby onely designe to raise mens endeavours: although I could have wished that they had considered better, how readily men of corrupt

rupt mindes and vitious practices lay aside all care of Gods Commandments, upon this suggestion, that they are grievous; and are deterred from a holy and vertuous life.

But that Vice is more troublesome and uneasie than Vertue, will (besides what I have formerly said) appear to be so, from the following Considerations. *First*, Sacred Records represent sinners as men who *weary themselves with sin*; and the Prophet *Isaiah* describes their trouble by a very apt similitude, *Isa. 57. 20. The wicked is like the troubled sea, when it cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt.* The ways of sin are frequently called *crooked paths*, and wicked men are said to *walk astray*; whileas the way of Holiness and Vertue is said to be a *streight and high way*: All which phrases plainly enough imply, that the former is full of intricacy and perplexities, and the latter plain and easie.

Experiences to prove this, are every day so multiplied, that they may abundantly serve to silence all doubts. The *Drunkard* can experimentally tell the costliness of his sin, and the tormenting diseases that are frequently the effect of an overcharged Stomach; the uneasie belchings

belchings and overturnings within, the grievous pains of Head and Joynts. The *Wanton* and *Lascivious* can produce his painful boils and sores, to witness the uneasiness of Lust; at best, he can onely produce an hectick Body. But besides those loathsome diseases that are the effects of Lasciviousness, how restless and uneasie is the condition of such persons? But how impossible is it to give a just list of those miseries that Wantonness and Intemperance hurry men to? To what a multitude of amazing difficulties does *Pride* expose men! what mischiefs, jarrs and contests does it raise? *Envy* and *Revenge* torment mens spirits, and so disquiet and perturb them, that men may as well take fire into their bosom, and pretend they preceive no torment, as lodge those horrid lusts in their breasts without the sense of their extream misery and pain. The *Covetous* minde is never at rest, but is ever craving and desirous of more. But to shew how troublesome the practice of every sin is, requires a larger discourse than I can well allow.

But how easie is Vertue, if compared with Vice? At what trouble and pains are men, to invent a lie? and when they have contrived it, they cannot but be afraid

afraid lest it be discovered. But how easie is it to speak the truth? With how much art and pains do men trouble themselves to conceal their vices? The Adulterer is wearied with watching convenient opportunities, and afraid lest he be discovered; whileas the chaste person enjoys himself quietly, & is troubled with no such attender. The *covetous Miser* is cruciate and tormented with a desire of what he cannot expect; is extreemly tormented by an incessant care, lest he lose what he hath, and ever toiling to acquire more; whileas the vertuous Soul is contented with what he enjoyeth, and grudgeth not to bestow a part of what is his to others.

There is no man who is not quite given up to commit all manner of wickedness, and whose conscience is not feared as with a hot Iron, but can tell by his experience how perplexing and uneasie Vice is. And to make this yet more plain, I shall adde these few following Reasons. *First*, the nature of Vice is so reproachful, that men are even troubled to coyn shifts to avoid the owning it; and sure this cannot but be uneasie to men. *Secondly*, the most viciously inclined persons, who will not practise, yet are forced for their interest

rest to pretend Vertue, and usually indeed become greater Zealots than those who are really vertuous : But this cannot but be exceedingly troublesome to them, it being against their inclinations, and contradictory to the internal sentiments of their mindes. And besides, at what pains are they to make other men believe that they are real in what they onely pretend ? *Thirdly*, Vice is very perplexing and difficult, upon the account that it requires hard, if not impossible performances : the Covetous mind is prompted to attempt many difficulties to obtain what it craves, and after all is disappointed. Nay, indeed, Covetousness is a vice so uneasy and troublesome, that it proposeth what can never be acquired : for after it hath got what is designed, it is restless, and as ready to say *Give, give,* as ever. But *Lastly*, that which contributes most to render Vice uneasy, are those after-pains of Conscience which fill the Soul with horror and amazement ; the consciousness of guilt stings and torments it, and makes the sinner a terror to himself. 'Tis impossible either to gag or corrupt Conscience, that it shall never give any check. But now how quieting and solacing is Vertue ? no man ever yet complained that

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terrors haunted him for living holily. O how do the thoughts of a vertuous life refresh men in the midst of greatest dangers? Let us go to sinners on their death-bed, and then we shall find this truth preached to the full; an evidence valid enough to condemn sin as the uneasiest thing imaginable.

And thus we have seen how many difficulties attend sin, both before, and after it is committed. And now what reason can any man alleadge for the pretended easiness of sin? I confess, I know not any thing, except it be *custom*, that can be pertinently adduced; but how weak is this Plea? for although Custom, which is a second nature, may contribute very much to stupifie the Judgement, and harden the Conscience, and so consequently make Vice the more easie; yet we can hardly suppose that ever Humane nature will so far assimilate the nature of mere Animals, as to be deprived of Reason and Conscience: And sure, so long as any of these remain, Vice must needs meet with opposition. But *Secondly*, if men will compare the easiness of Vertue and Vice, they must put them in equal circumstances; and then I doubt not but Vice shall stand condemned, as the great
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troubler of peace and quietness. For instance, let us suppose that a man is accustomed to a holy life, and is habituate to live soberly, righteously, and godly; in this case, let any man make but the experiment, and I am sure he shall ingenuously acknowledge, that a good life affords more tranquillity, and peace, than Vice dares lay claim to.

And yet, I know not by what bad luck, Holiness has been represented as opposite to mens present welfare, and hurtful to their peace and tranquillity. How groundless this prejudice is, I have already endeavoured to shew. I shall therefore now onely in a few words make it plain, that Holiness is the most effectual method that can be taken, to exalt the publick peace and happiness of a Nation. And Secondly, that it infinitely conduceth to the happiness, peace, and tranquillity of particular persons; and that nothing is so inconsistent with, and hurtful to both, as sin.

How much Holiness tends to the advancement of publick peace in a Kingdom and Nation, appears very plainly from the Wise mans observation, Prov.

14. 34. Righteousness exalteth a nation; but sin is the reproach of any people. And the

the Apostle St. *James* gives us a true account of the causes of publick jars, *Fam. 4. 1.* *From whence come Wars and Fightings amongst you ? Are they not hence, even from your Lusts that war in your Members ?* If Mankind had not corrupted their ways, and degenerated from their pristine purity, how peaceable and happy had Humane Societies been ? But in this lapsed State, Ambition, Pride, and Injustice Act their Tragical parts, and so tend to the destruction of Humane Societies, that if there did not remain some sparks and remainders of Religion, 'tis not possible that Humane Society could evite an utter ruine. And he that well ponders the settled course of Divine Providence, shall easily assent, that in all Ages Righteousness and Vertue have been rewarded with a temporal ranquillity and happiness ; and that *fruitful Lands have been turned into barrenness, for the wickedness of them that dwell therein.* And indeed 'tis very reasonable to think that the Divine Justice will reward a righteous Nation, and punish a rebellious People. 'Tis true, he may defer his Judgments for a while, yet his Justice will not always give place to mercy and forbearance ; but a Nation that contri-

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nueth and increaseth its provocations, must expect to be punished in this world, (which is the only proper place). as a Righteous Land may expect a present reward.

That Holiness doth also conduce to the peace and quietness of particular persons, is nothing less evident from Scripture: Psal. 119. 165. Great Peace have they that love thy Law, and nothing shall offend them: But the Wicked is like the troubled Sea when it cannot rest, whose Waters cast up Mire and Dirt, Isa. 57. 20. I have once and again shewed, that there can be no inward tranquillity and peace, where Holiness is wanting: The very thoughts of God, which above all things are most sweet, are notwithstanding troublesome to wicked men. But because Humane Nature is in this degenerate state extremely sunk down into Sense, and more apt to be wrought upon by temporal Advantages, than what only concern the Soul, and have a prospect to things that are future: I have also in the former part of this Discourse endeavoured to make plain, how advantageous Holiness is upon the foresaid account; and that length of days are in her Right Hand, and in her Left Hand Riches and Honour: That her ways

ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her Paths peace: That Godliness is great gain, having the promises of the life that now is, as well as of that which is to come. And indeed, any man, who considers the nature and reason of the thing, cannot but be inclined to think it must be so: For how can that man be exposed to trouble and disquietment, who hath gotten the Mastery over his Passions? And I dare appeal to the Sinners own experience, whether Vices have not been prejudicial to his Health, macerated his Body, and filled him with tortures and pains? Whether some Sins have not brought him to poverty and disgrace, ruined both his Estate and Fame? Can any man produce any good effect that ever sin caused? Sure, if men would speak impartially, they should acknowledge all this to be true.

That there is a great deal of more pleasure in the ways of Holiness than in the Commission of sin, (which is the fourth thing proposed to be considered) needs not puzzle any man to prove it. How delightful are all Acts of Piety and Virtue? How unexpressible is that comfort that the devout Soul finds in conversing with God? Well might the Psalmist say,

Light is sown for the Righteous, and Glad-

ness for the upright in heart, Psal. 97. 11. be often experienced that sweetness and satisfaction that is the result of Obedience; whileas, *Solomon*, who could pass the best verdict of sensual pleasures, yet concludes them to be but *Vanity and vexation of Spirit.*

There be two things that allay the pleasures of sin: *First*, the unruliness of immoderate passions, which fret and vex the minds of men, and hinder the sinner from tasting its pleasure. *Secondly*, the fear of an invisible being, armed to punish them for their misdemeanors: Conscience, upon the apprehension of guilt, recoils upon the sinner, and marrs all the pleasure he promised himself to enjoy: This made *Belsazzar*, a King, and environed with his Nobles, tremble and quake in the midst of his Cups. But supposing Vices did bring as much pleasure along with them as they pretend, yet upon two accounts they are not half so delicious as the pleasures that spring from a good life. *First*, The pleasures of Sin are so interrupted, of a short duration, or, as the Apostle expresseth them, they are but *for a season*: How quickly will a period be put to all these pleasures, which now make so much noise? They are very fitly compared

compared by *Solomon*, to the crackling of *Thorns under a pot*, which are scarce sooner in a blaze, than they vanish ; but the joys that spring from a good conversation, are at their lowest ebb here : They do indeed continue, *for no man taketh away this joy* ; but Heaven is the designed place for the good Soul to feed upon those *Rivers of Pleasures that are at God's Right Hand for evermore*. Secondly, sensual pleasures do soon cloy mens appetites : We cannot enjoy long any sensual delight, but we are quickly weary of it : But it is not so with spiritual delights ; 'tis only the absence of them, when suspended for our sins, that troubles and molests us. 'Tis impossible that sensual pleasures can satisfy the soul of man, which was never framed for a Mahometan Paradise ; nor can it be rationally expected, that he who is conscious to himself of guilt, should be free from fear ; which being so tormenting, can never permit men to enjoy pleasure freely.

But let us descend to sensual pleasures, and we shall find, that he who is temperate and moderate, is more likely to relish the pleasantness of Meat, Drink, and Pastime, than the intemperate and immoderate. He who relieves the Poor, and

refresheth the Needy, cannot but find more real sweetness and satisfaction in doing so, than he who drinks away his Estate. He who speaks the truth, finds not those tormenting Checks of Conscience which are the just reward of lying. But all this will more plainly appear, by the Solution of the next Objection.

The second Imputation is brought from Experience; namely, that wicked men are for ordinary very jovial and cheerful, and enjoy a great deal of satisfaction in their ways; whereas men who pretend to Piety and Holiness; are very sad and disconsolate.

To this I answer; That the Question is not whether wicked men have some pleasure in their sins, or not? But, whether that pleasure that ariseth from a good life, be not infinitely preferable to these? Alas! the most promising sensual pleasure (supposing it to be lawful) is much inferiour to the satisfaction and comfort that springs from a good Conscience. How much more inconsiderable must sinful pleasures be, which are attended with so black and dismal consequences? Indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish upon every soul of man that doth evil. Sinful pleasures are at the best but short; and sure
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this consideration contributes very much to lessen their value : But that which makes them so mean, and not worth the enjoying, is the painful Eternity that succeeds to them.

However then the wicked may appear jovial and merry , yet their inward thoughts (if we could discover them) cannot be at quiet and ease : Whatever pleasure they may reap in the present act, yet they cannot afterwards look unto themselves without horreur and amazement : The after-stings of sin are so painful, that he buys those present pleasures at a rate no reasonable man would purchase them.

But that wicked men cannot really enjoy that pleasure and contentment they pretend to, seems very plain from Reason. For *First*, How can any man be satisfied with those Actions which are so cross to his very Nature, and opposite to Reason, as every sin is ? Can a man find pleasure in doing that which he knows he ought not to do ? Sure the reboundings of Conscience, upon the apprehension of doing amiss, will soon rase out any pleasure that sin affords ; and a sick man may more rationally expect rest, than those men pleasure and contentment. *Second-*

ly, it can afford little pleasure to men, to act quite contrary to their own interests; it is rather like the laughter of fools and mad men, than a real pleasure, that such men can pretend to. Now every sinner quite ruins his Interest and Happiness, while he runneth Headlong to destruction; and for a present pleasure, which is only grateful to the sensual Appetite, loseth those lasting Rivers of pleasure, which though future, are yet certain, and which are calculated for the Soul. *Thirdly*, What pleasure can any man enjoy, who is sure to be eternally tormented? *As there is no peace, so no pleasure to the wicked, who are at odds with God, whose favour is better than life.*

But what reason have good men to be sad and disconsolate, since all the causes of grief are removed from them? *Light is sown for the Righteous, and Gladness for the upright in heart*; so that the Apostle had good reason to double that Exhortation, *Rejoyce in the Lord, again I say rejoyce*. O how satisfying and pleasant is it for men to act reasonably, and to be assured that they have done their duty, and have acted for their own interest! *Our rejoycing is this (saith the Apostle) the Testimony of our Consciences, that in all simplicity*

simplicity and godly sincerity we have had our conversation in the world,

Sure there was never any man who was troubled for living holily, there being no reason why any should: 'Tis true, good men may be of a melancholy disposition, and naturally inclined to sadness; but this can be no reflection on Holiness, as if it were the cause of that melancholy temper: Nay, the best of men have their own failings, and no wonder though these breed some trouble and disquiet: But this is not to be disconsolate for being good, but for doing evil. And indeed, I may add, that the great abominations and profanity, the contempt of Religion, and dishonour that is done to God that abounds, may very rationally make good men with the Psalmist say, *Rivers of tears run down my eyes, because men observe not thy Law.*

And thus this imputation cast upon Holiness, is easily wip'd off. Grief and sadness are not the effect of a good life; but of an imperfect obedience: And while our sins call for mourning and fasting, it were a piece of madness for men to be jovial and merry, and entertain themselves with these deceitful melodies, which will end in *weeping and gnashing of teeth.*

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And yet the sorrow of truly good men is not so obvious to the eye of men, as it is to him who is *the searcher of the heart*; it is rather the Artifice of the formal Penitent, and hypocritical Professor, than the Character of the Righteous, to *disfigure their Faces*, and appear sad and demure. A good man chuseth rather, with *David*, to mourn in secret, and when he appears in publick to wash his face, than with those Hypocrites of whom *Isaiah* speaks, who *bow down their head like a bull-rush*, who have *chosen Affliction rather than Innocence*.

The next imputation cast upon Holiness is, that it is but a piece of *singularity*, and a vain Ambition to walk alone. *Ans.* I am heartily sorry that the universal deluge of Impiety should make good men say as once *Elijah* did in another case, *I am only left*: The few number of good men, compared with the vast multitude and Armies of Transgressors, makes them to be esteemed singular and Precise; and brings upon them the wrath and fury of ungodly sinners, because *they will not run with them to the same excess of Riot*, and wallow in the mire as they do. But truly this charge is not more rational, than if a company of mad men should call

call one a singular fool, because he does not comply with them in all their extravagant actings, which do really rather require pity and compassion than imitation.

I doubt not but Singularity in some cases is a very intolerable temper, and unbecoming any man who pretends wisdom: But yet, if it be universally condemned, and in no case admitted as reasonable, I don't see but the Charge will rebound upon the finner, who in this degenerate Age thinks the worse of himself, if he exceed not others in wickedness.

But since Holiness is so conformable to Humane Reason, so advantageous and beneficial to every man; what madness is it to condemn it as singular? Sure, he who intends to walk as a man who is of *a good Understanding*, (as good men are said to be) who intends to mind his Interest and Happiness, will never be frightened from Holiness, because may be it is not in vogue, nor become the mode of the Kingdom. If a whole Kingdom (excepting a few) should rebel against their Prince, would it be any blot upon these few Loyal Subjects, that they affected Singularity?

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But this cavit is so insignificant and silly, that I need not enlarge. Sure, since Holiness is the peculiar excellency and noble embellishment of Humane Nature ; since it is so venerable and lovely, and of all perfections the most excellent ; he must be degenerate to the brutal nature, who condemns singularity in Holiness ; for this is in truth a condemning a man because he is *more excellent than his Neighbour*, as the Righteous is said to be in Scripture.

The last heavy Charge is, that it is folly and madness for men to quit with their present pleasures, and expose themselves to grievous troubles, for a future reward which is uncertain, and which no body ever saw. To this I *Answer*, First, it is a great mistake to think that Holiness exposeth men to relinquish Temporal and Sensual Pleasures, there being no men in the World so qualified to Experiment the sweetness of these, none who live in so happy and flourishing condition, who are more healthful, and enjoy a greater measure of peace and quietness, than good men. The only inconveniency they are exposed to, is affliction upon the account of Religion ; which when Christianity did commence, was no rare thing, but now is not so ordinary. But supposing
good

good men were exposed to greater afflictions than other men, yet there is a great deal of satisfaction in submitting to them, since they are but *light Afflictions*, and *momentary* too, *which work for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of Glory*. These small Evils are rather to be endured, than lasting Pains and Torments. Sure, Of two evils, the least is to be chosen.

Secondly, Although the reward of Holiness be future, yet 'tis not uncertain. We have as great assurance that there will be a reward for the Righteous in another World, as the nature of the thing is capable of: And sure he is an unwise man that asks any other demonstration or proof. Now that there is a reward laid up for good men, which though unseen, is yet as certain as if it were obvious to Sense, we have the greatest rational Evidence, and the best Moral Arguments to confirm it. For *first*, if there be a God; *Secondly*, if the Scriptures be the Word of God; then there is not any thing more certain, than that there is a state of Rewards and Punishments after this life. *First*, if there be a God, then we can have no reasonable scruple about the future reward; for since God is *holy* and *just* (perfections essential

sential to a Deity) then certainly he will, as the great Governour of the World, reward Vertue, and punish Vice. But this doth not always fall out so here; therefore it is reasonable to conclude, that he hath reserved the wicked till that great day of wrath, and prepared a reward for the Righteous. *Secondly*, If the Scripture be the Word of God, then he who runs may read this truth.

We have then the greatest moral assurance possible, that there is a future reward; which may sufficiently encourage men to hazard all they enjoy here, for the expectation of it. But I shall only suppose that the future reward is possible; (which I think few will deny, or can prove it to be impossible) yet even upon this supposition, good men who part with the transitory things of this life, prove a great deal wiser than those who condemn them: For if there be no life after this, all the loss a good man suffers, is that of temporal conveniency; he hath denied himself the enjoyment of sensual pleasures, so far as he judgeth them sinful; he is not so intemperate as other men, and perhaps is exposed to some hazards for his Religion; at the most, *all* that he is to hazard is but very small.

But

But if there be a future reward, in what a dismal state are the wicked, who shall everlastingly be deprived of it, and be irrecoverably plunged into a state of lasting and severe torments?

But since we are assured of a future reward, and know certainly, that *the Righteous shall shine forth as the Sun in the Kingdom of their Father*, and that the wicked *shall be cast into utter darkness*; What folly and madness is it to be careful for the Body, and careless what becomes of the Soul; to provide for Time, and neglect Eternity? Sure 'tis no wonder though the Wise Man does so frequently characterize the sinner a fool, and represents him as one that *lacketh understanding*: And indeed we may rationally say, *This their way is their folly*; their foolish choice proclaims, *that those workers of iniquity have no knowledge.*

THE

THE CONCLUSION.

WE have now seen the Excellency and Beauty of Holiness, have discovered the absolute Perfection of its Nature, and the Completeness of its Rule; have taken a view of its Allurements and powerful Motives, and have discovered the weakness of those Cavils that are urged against it: And what remains, but that we set about this work with the greatest seriousness imaginable; that *we give no sleep to our eyes, nor slumber to our eyelids*, till we forsake our sins, and enter upon a course of Holiness?

If God had imposed upon us a heavy and intollerable yoke; if he had commanded us to perform some grievous and uneasy service, had we not been obliged to have obeyed? But since he only Commands us *to Wash and be Clean*, requires only our consent to what is so much our own interest, only exacts that we separate our selves from those Lusts that pollute and defile us, that vex and torment

torments our minds, and which (if continued in) will certainly ruine and undo us; what fools and madmen are we if we refuse to hear his voice?

Almighty God has been drawing us with the Cords of Love; has presented to us the most charming Motives to excite our love and esteem; has carried us (as it were) to the *Pinacle* of the *Temple*, and discovered to us *all the glory and beauty of this World*; has taken us to *Pisgah*, and given us a view of the good *Land of Canaan*, of the *City of the living God*, of which glorious things are spoken; and promised, that *all these things shall be ours*, if we will but be holy in all manner of conversation. And to excite our fear, he has opened to our view, the powers of the *World to come*; has plainly told us of the pains and torments that the damned suffer day and night, and that *indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish*, remains as the due portion of those that do evil. And now may he not take up that same protestation that he used to his ancient People the Jews; *What more can I do for you?* But alas! we have in the most insolent manner despised all these charms of Love, and, like the madman in the Gospel, have

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broken

broken to pieces the strongest Fetters and Chains. We are, God knows, as deeply sunk into sensuality and brutishness, as those to whom *the Grace of God that bringeth Salvation* hath never appeared. 'Tis not credible, (I may say possible) that men could have been more wicked than they now are, supposing they had never heard of Heaven or Hell.

'Tis a wonder (as any one would think) that those very men who profess they believe in Christ, should so grossly and openly contradict his plain precepts; that those who believe, that *without Holiness no man shall see the Lord, and that the wrath of God is revealed from Heaven against all ungodliness*, yet persist in their abominable wickedness, and are neither awed with fears, nor animated with hopes. What is all this, but for men to expose themselves to the contempt rather than pity of discerning men?

We have surveyed the several advantages which attend Holiness; have discovered how much Man's Temporal as well as his Eternal Welfare and Happiness depends upon it: We have explained how in her Right Hand is length of Days, and in her Left Hand are Riches and Ho-

nour:

hour : That *her ways are ways of Pleasantness, and all her Paths peace* : And now may we not give the same Testimony of it which *Joshua* and *Caleb* did of *Canaan*, Numb. 14. *The Land which we passed through to search, it is an exceeding good Land?* The Sons of *Anak* (I mean the pretended difficulties) are not so strong as some men represent them to be ; we need not be discouraged to Encounter with them ; *Greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world.* Alas ! what Objection can men possibly make against a Duty that is so excellent, useful, and necessary, that is founded upon such mighty motives, as may prevail with any who is not quite petrified in desperate Impiety ? Good God ! What stupid folly is this, that men *hide their hands in their Bosom*, and will not so much as stretch them out to this *Tree of Life*, that they may eat of this fruit, *which is pleasant to the Eye*, and profitable both to our present and future happiness.

'Tis indeed pity, that men should be thus permitted to run headlong to destruction. Alas ! is Perdition so lovely and desirable, that, like *Rachel*, a double servitude is *thought light for it* ? And shall wise and discerning men be Eye-witnesses

of the bad bargain those men make, and not warn them of their folly? I know this is a duty chiefly incumbent to our spiritual Watchmen to discharge; I doubt not but many of them stand upon their watch, and warn men of their danger. It were to be wished that all and every of them were thus faithful; but sure every man is in some manner concerned to be *his Brothers keeper*: And he is highly criminal, who should see a mad man running upon danger, and not stop him in his course.

I wish some new-coined Doctrines had not an inauspicious influence upon the bad practices of many, had not too much Countenanced and Authorized Vice: But my present design is so far from Controversial, that I shall rather think my self concerned to inveigh against needless disputes, than start any. If I may speak from my own experience, I ingeniously confess, I find Disputes so insipid and fruitless, and in the review so unsatisfactory, that I am resolved henceforth to bid an eternal Adieu to them, and to condemn them as the great underminers of Christian Piety: And if any shall after this fair warning assault any Doctrine I have elsewhere owned, I hope discerning men will

will neither esteem me nor the Cause the worse, that I draw not my Sword in its defence.

And now what shall I say more, but Conclude with *Moses's* passionate Exhortation, *Deut. 32. 46.* *Set your hearts to the Words which I testify to you this day: For it is not a vain thing, because it is your Life.* Let us no longer delay and put off this duty; while it is called to day, let us not harden our hearts through the deceitfulness of sin; but seriously search and try our ways, and turn to the Lord: This is the proper season for so necessary a work; ere long there will be no time left us to consider our ways: O that in this our day we did understand the things that belong to our peace, before they be hid from our eyes! If men would but be induced to imitate the Psalmists Example, *Psal. 119. 59.* *I thought on my ways, I doubt not but they should also imitate the course he did take, I made hast and delayed not to keep thy Commandments.* But Men consider not what they are doing, and so no wonder though they perish, no wonder that they prefer darkness to light, and despise Holiness as a thing of no value. Let us therefore humbly and heartily
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invoke the Father of Lights to open the Eyes of Men ; whom the God of this World hath blinded , that they may flee from the wrath to come, by cleansing themselves from all filthiness of the Flesh and Spirit, Perfecting Holiness in the fear of God.

FINIS.

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